



# **The Winding Road to a New Identity**

**Saudi Arabian Curriculum 2016–19**

Interim Report



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February 2020

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## Executive Summary

This interim report on Saudi Arabia's national curriculum covers 2016–19 textbooks, reviewed according to UNESCO-derived standards of peace and tolerance. Saudi textbooks have been exported internationally, including to countries in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Europe and North America.

### Some Main Findings:

- Extremism persists but **most changes demonstrate moderation**.
- The **textbooks do not teach equality between women and men**. Women must obey husbands.
- Nevertheless, **women's empowerment is also evident** and modern norms advanced.
- Non-Muslims still considered infidels, but the **new curriculum shows more openness to the West and Christians**.
- **Harsh anti-Jewish and anti-gay expressions remain**. Sufi and Shiite practices are criticized.
- **Israel is not shown on maps**. The 2019 curriculum offers an **unbalanced view** of Israel compared with previous editions.
- The attitude toward Iran and Turkey is blurred with contradictions but are mostly not treated harshly.
- **Jihad war** is thoroughly discussed but it is **mostly taught as an aspect of national defense**.
- Numerous **limitations regarding the application of jihad**—the **king has sole authority to declare jihad war**. **Living for Allah is more important than dying for Allah**, but martyrdom for the sake of Allah remains a "godly gift, a divine dignity."
- **There is praise for those who sacrifice their lives as martyrs** (*shahid*, *shuhada*) for Allah, namely in battle for the faith.
- The curriculum **sharply criticizes and takes responsibility for terrorism committed by Muslims**.
- **Focus of students is on prosperity through hard work and cooperation**, *not* on incitement or preparation for war.

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All Muslims in Saudi Arabia must go through nine years of compulsory education (ages 6–14).<sup>1</sup> The curriculum examined in this report covers primary (grades 1–6), intermediate (grades 7–9) and secondary (grades 10–12) schools. The study of Islam is central among the subjects taught in the curriculum.<sup>2</sup> (Of more than thirty-thousand schools, 90 percent are public; the rest are private.) Schools are required to use the Islamic textbooks issued by the Ministry of Education.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> UNESCO, "Saudi Arabia," UNESCO-UIS, <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/sa>.

Historically, the alliance between the Al-Saud family and the Wahhabi religious establishment created a curriculum that was highly suspicious of foreigners, other religions and sects within Islam.

Following the September 11 attacks, the United States and its allies demanded educational reform by the Saudis. Examinations of the curriculum in recent years have found less anti-Jewish and anti-Christian material. There was also less anti-Shiite and anti-Sufi content taught in elementary schools. Other intolerant content remained, particularly at the high school level, including the social exclusion of non-Muslims.<sup>4</sup>

In April 2016, Vision 2030 was introduced as a new national Saudi strategy, including a focus on educational reform. As this report confirms, changes have taken place at an evolutionary rather than revolutionary pace, predicated on long-standing conservative tradition.

IMPACT-se's review of Saudi textbooks has detected subtle, yet substantive changes in the language, tone, narrative and outlook of the curriculum; efforts are made to describe, analyze and portray the Other with less hostile and destructive rhetoric. Yet, there has not been a wholesale elimination of problematic content<sup>5</sup> or language.

The Wahhabi view of Islam is evident throughout the school textbooks. The principle of *tawhid* (oneness [of Allah], monotheism—a pillar of Islam particularly central to Wahhabism) constitutes a central theme of the curriculum. Islam is seen as the innate or true religion. Other monotheistic faiths—Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism—feature distortions. Some moderation is apparent.

### Islamic Studies

Preserving Wahhabi-Islamic culture and its distinct features is a focal point of the curriculum. The curriculum warns against close attachments and friendship with non-Muslims and participation in religious festivals together. Within the Islamic textbooks, Western culture is considered to be dangerous to traditional values. Harsh anti-Jewish sentiment remains.

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<sup>2</sup> Education, Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC,  
<https://www.saudiembassy.net/education>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 33,000 schools in 2011 according to International Center for Religion and Diplomacy, "The State of Tolerance in the Curriculum of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," (completed in 2012 for US government use only, released under Freedom of Information Act in 2016), p.11,  
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/08/17/international-home/document-state-dept-study-on-saudi-textbooks.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Representative Ted Poe, "Saudi Educational Transparency and Reform Act, H.R. 4549, introduced Dec 5, 2017,  
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/4549/text>;  
 see also IMPACT-se report on "Islamic Education in North America,"  
<https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/Between-Sharia-and-Democracy-NA.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Problematic content includes violence or incitement to violence; hatred of the Other; and radical, inappropriate or disturbing material.

Nevertheless, working with non-Muslims is commonplace. Even food may be prepared by non-Muslims as long as it is within Islamic strictures.

While *jihad* war is thoroughly discussed, it is taught as an aspect of national defense rather than fighting infidels. The concept of *wasatiyyah* may be explained to mean "moderation," accompanied by harsh criticism of Islamist terrorism and extremism. Muslims are expected to serve as role models for Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The curriculum sharply criticizes terrorism committed by Muslims. There are no calls for proselytizing, but the historical spread of Islam is taught.

Textbooks teach that "Life for the sake of Allah is greater than death in His way."<sup>6</sup> At the same time, martyrdom for the sake of Allah remains a "godly gift, a divine dignity."<sup>7</sup>

### **Saudi Nationalism**

Saudi students are introduced to illustrations of pre-Islamic art—formerly an unthinkable proposition. Pre-Islamic Arabs serve as inspiration for patriotism and role-models for women. "The Arabs had commendable moral values. For example: heroism, generosity, keeping promises and protecting one's neighbor. Women gained high status in Arab society."<sup>8</sup> The Arabic language courses play an "essential role in asserting Islamic-Arab cultural identity and in strengthening the Saudi national character."<sup>9</sup>

While the Islamic sections warn against Western culture, the curriculum as a whole looks to modern ideas and openness. An art book for high school focuses on Western painting techniques and images while also featuring Islamic abstract and Saudi modern art.

The textbook does not discuss what non-Muslims living in Saudi Arabia do in the privacy of their homes. While the curriculum is intensely religious and strict, there is no particular animosity toward foreigners and non-Muslims; employment preferences are given to Muslims.

Descriptions of tribal affiliations appear to be minimal, but local clothing is noted. Students are warned against tribal doctors and "sorcerers," categorically prohibited by Islam, but seemingly having much influence.

### **Family and Gender**

The curriculum focuses on the male-female family unit, largely ignores polygamy and tribal affiliations, and categorically rejects non-traditional gender roles (including actors playing roles), as well as homosexual behavior. Within the textbooks, the conservative fabric of Saudi society remains intact, with an emphasis on the family as the center of a strong moral Saudi state. Morality, respect for authority, and a pious and traditional outlook all serve as important

<sup>6</sup> *Hadith and Islamic Culture 3*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019, p. 183.

<sup>7</sup> *Tafsir 2*, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019, p. 116.

<sup>8</sup> *Social Studies and Civics*, Grade 4, Vol. 2, 2019, p. 45.

<sup>9</sup> *My Language*, Grade 1, Vol. 1, 2019, p. 4.

points of reference for the textbooks to dictate proscribed behavior. Lessons are interspersed with more traditional instruction on the virtues of the Saudi family and the woman's role in caring for children in the home and managing family affairs and budgets; men are heads of the family and providers but female entrepreneurship is encouraged and women are generally respected.

As recently as a 2018 Qur'anic commentary textbook,<sup>10</sup> men were in some cases still allowed to beat their wives and children, although this verse ([Nisa', Women, Sura 4:34] "men are in charge of women") was removed in 2019. Nevertheless, the curriculum appears to have begun the process of change; the door has been opened, however slightly, and will in all likelihood be put to good use by entrepreneurial female students as they become young adults.

Once a woman is married, the husband's permission should still be sought for many things. But, interestingly, the curriculum charts an environment where it is almost impossible for him to refuse. Khadija, the Prophet's first wife and a successful businesswoman, serves as a role model demonstrating women's empowerment in Arabia before and during the Islamic period.

### **Peace and the Region**

Muslim infighting (*fitna*) and Islamist terrorism are represented as great dangers for the world; the kingdom's security is a priority. The attitude toward Iran, Turkey and Israel is blurred with contradictions. Historical animus toward Iran and Zoroastrians persists. War against the Ottomans is a feature. Regarding Israel, a 2017 textbook featured surprising moderation in the form of a flattering painting of Zionist founder, Theodore Herzl; the 2019 version appears to have retracted much of that, and reintroduced some of the anti-Zionist language. Israel remains out of the maps, and is still seen as conspiring and striving to control the Middle East. But the myth of Jewish plans for world domination have been removed. Anti-Jewish content remains in the form of stories of Jewish assassins and "treachery"; but there is reduced attention on early Islam-Jewish conflicts. The hadith on fighting the Jews in the day of resurrection, however, is still being taught.<sup>11</sup> The curriculum alludes, albeit hesitantly, to the Holocaust: "Some minorities are exposed to deportation and extermination from the[ir] countries such as the expulsion of the Jews from Europe and the Indians from Uganda."<sup>12</sup>

Some cautious respect is exhibited to Judaism and Christianity, showing the region to be the "cradle of the three heavenly religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam." Yet, there are no images of churches or synagogues—only of mosques; Christians and Jews are "infidels" for corrupting their scriptures and for rejecting Muhammad.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Tafsir 2*, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2018, p. 173.

<sup>11</sup> *Tafsir 2*, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019, p. 86.

<sup>12</sup> *Geography and National Education 2*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature, Administration and Qur'an), 2019, p. 120.

<sup>13</sup> *Tawhid 5*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Science and Administration), 2019, pp. 151–52; *Tawhid 1*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 165.

Saudi Vision 2030, the central pillar of this curriculum, describes a future of peace and trade. Free trade and foreign economic investment in a safe environment are central elements of this vision; phrases like: "animated society," "thriving economy," and "lucrative opportunities" punctuate this strategic plan throughout, with traditional culture and Islam as its counterbalances.

While Saudi Arabia's curriculum does not yet meet international standards of peace and tolerance, its focus is not on incitement or preparation for war. An image showing a small private home on "Peace Street" in a community named "Prosperity" seems an apt representation of what the kingdom hopes to achieve.<sup>14</sup> The textbooks envision a future of prosperity through hard work by a new generation of Saudis who will embrace their traditional values and culture even as the kingdom prepares to welcome international trade, investment and visitors.

It should be noted that Saudi Arabia is in the process of transformation from an exclusively traditionalist Islamic society to one that incorporates more Western economic values, in addition to a rediscovery of its pre-Islamic heritage. However, the kingdom *remains* an Islamic society at its base. Despite the animation of Vision 2030 seen throughout, sharia remains the underlying principle applied to virtually everything students learn.

Looking at four years of curriculum changes, with steps forward and some back across a spectrum of issues—gender, Western values, Christians, Iran, Jews and Israel—to name a few, leaves us wondering if the Saudi authorities know exactly how to navigate the uneasy waters of their traditional religious orthodoxy and the new economic and cultural world. Events both within the kingdom—and without—appear largely not within their control.

Where other curricula often represent the underlying values that a society wants to teach (or impose) on its progeny, the Saudi curriculum, at this stage, can only be seen as a reflection of the efforts being made to *find* the path leading to something more stable, secure and yes, new.



Peace Street; Prosperity Quarter<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Family Culture*, Grade 1, Vol.1 2019, p. 64.

<sup>15</sup> *Family Education*, Grade 1, Vol. 1 (for Girls), 2019, p. 64.

## Preface/Acknowledgements



**Girl:** I am Saudi: I will be, Inshallah, an outstanding physician, and I will discover more medical inventions because my homeland is great.

**Boy:** I am Saudi. I love my homeland and I work diligently and faithfully; I observe Allah's commands and I respect others.

*Social Studies and Civics, Grade 6, Vol. 2, 2019, p. 77.*

The Saudi curriculum retains unacceptable and intolerant material, especially in religious textbooks for higher grades. Happily, gradual improvements have appeared in recent years, in secular and lower grades. There is a long way to go to meet international standards.

In the conclusion of this report we present a methodological dilemma: does the positive and gradual evolutionary change justify the radical elements that linger on? The assumption behind this dilemma is that change is difficult since curricula more often than not represent deep seated needs of powerful groups in society. An abrupt change may lead to unexpected consequences if it threatens worldviews and destroys the perceived legitimacy of the institutions that hold society together. All things being equal, a long and slow process seems preferable to a fast-paced one.

The alliance of the Al-Saud family and the Wahhabi clerics held society together, resisting change for many years; ultimately they weakened society due to their rigid ideology. With foreign enemies and allies alike challenging the kingdom, and oil wealth becoming less dependable, a new direction became necessary if Saudi society was to thrive. Despite resistance, more attention was eventually given to the needs and aspirations of women, the youth, various tribal voices and pro-Western-minded citizens to express their talents and to become prosperous and happy.

Rigidity and hate for others cannot unlock the potential of a nation, while respect for others is a key to prosperity and security. It opens doors of trade and cooperation and the free flow of ideas and resources.



As the new curriculum demonstrates, the Saudis seem determined to solve their economic problems; for this they have created Vision 2030. What remains worrisome to many of those who control the kingdom is the effect of external secular forces on their traditionalist religious society. This perhaps explains the pendulum that is so apparent in this report. Four years of back-and-forth changes in the curriculum covering a full spectrum of issues—from radicalization and moderation; the harshness of punishments and threats; women's empowerment; attitudes toward Israel and Zionism and Turkey and Iran; Western culture; minorities and various religious and sexual Others; martyrdom and *jihad* versus *life* as central values; Islam and nationalism; families, tribes and the nation, to openness and consultation versus authoritarianism and obedience.

Based on the research for this report, a reasonable conclusion is that most changes have led toward moderation, despite the addition of new extremist material. It is particularly encouraging that the focus of students is on *prosperity through hard work, rather than incitement or preparation for war*.

In other words, Saudi Arabia is seeking a place in the region which represents more than just a defensive posture against foreign threats. Such a process is part of the maturation of a long and arduous internal discourse now being imparted to the new generation. Whether such changes will be permanent and long standing is unclear. But change is usually the last choice of individuals, groups and nations. Given the demands of society, it will be much harder to turn back from positive steps forward.

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Research for this report began more than a year ago. The interim nature of the findings represents a new beginning for IMPACT-se's continued analysis of the Saudi education system. We encourage the curriculum's continued development in more positive directions to meet international standards of peace and tolerance benefitting the Saudi people and the Middle East region.

Our appreciation to IMPACT-se team members, including Asher Spekterman and Jordan Kastrinski for their Arabic translations and research and Julia Cole for her proofing; to Saudi researchers: Liran Ofek, Nadav Israeli, Evyatar Abergel, Eyal Politansky, Eitan Ishai, Inbal Baron, Hagal Yehoshafat, Amos Taron and Elan David; to the Tel Aviv University team led by Prof. Uzi Rabi with Dr. Nachum Shiloh and Saeed Abu Mach for their initial research into past Saudi curricula. Finally, but certainly not last: to IMPACT-se CEO Marcus Sheff for his inspiration and insightful reviews of the drafts and to COO Arik Agassi, who facilitated the research through the intricate swings of the pendulum that *is* the current Saudi curriculum.

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Director of Research

## Introduction

Over the past decade, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has undergone a period of substantial internal political change. The ascendancy of Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman (MBS), the son of King Salman, and his successful consolidation of power, has nudged the kingdom through a new period of domestic reform and modernization. Some analysts have seen the rise of MBS as a harbinger for greater political freedoms, religious moderation and a decline of Wahhabism and its clerical class.<sup>16</sup>

Under MBS, "Saudization" [*al-su'uda*] has found its way into civic culture, with its influence on Saudi identity and nationalism.<sup>17</sup> Such changes are most prominently seen in the Saudi education system. The textbooks used by the curriculum emphasize three significant areas promoted by the Saudi state: a new Saudi civic culture; the importance of family as the backbone of the Saudi social order; and the emergence of a new Saudi expression of Islam which recognizes its geographic and cultural identity as it links with its pre-Islamic past.

In fact, actual reform in politics and society appears to be more complex. Ultimately this represents the evolution of a Muslim-driven society as it merges with a modern Saudi Arabia searching for its national identity. At its core, the political changes in the kingdom are aimed at creating and molding a new Saudi citizen—at once more nationalistic, but with greater awareness of the broader world and able to successfully interact with Other cultures. This includes the crafting of new ideas of what it means to be a Saudi citizen along with the development of a wider civic ethos.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, the curriculum demonstrates that strict orthodox values remain intact, even as new identities emerge.

MBS's influence appears to be behind many of the current societal changes, but the policies linked to *su'uda* began during the reign of King Abdullah [2005–15] and were aimed at increasing local employment in domestic industries, while lessening dependence on foreign workers.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Stratfor, "Why Saudi Arabia Is Embracing a New Nationalism," Real Clear World, January 7, 2019, [https://www.realclearworld.com/articles/2019/01/07/why\\_saudi\\_arabia\\_is\\_embracing\\_a\\_new\\_nationalism\\_112943.html](https://www.realclearworld.com/articles/2019/01/07/why_saudi_arabia_is_embracing_a_new_nationalism_112943.html).

<sup>17</sup> Andrew England and Ahmed Al Omran, "Nationalism on the Rise as Saudi Arabia Seeks Sense of Identity," *Financial Times*, May 7, 2019, <https://www.ft.com/content/31845386-6cb9-11e9-80c7-60ee53e6681d>.

<sup>18</sup> Jane Kinninmont, "Vision 2030 and Saudi Arabia's Social Contract: Austerity and Transformation," Middle East and North Africa Program, Chatham House, July 2017, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/2017-07-20-vision-2030-saudi-kinninmont.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> Steffen Hertog, *Princes, Brokers, and Bureaucrats: Oil and the State in Saudi Arabia* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2010), pp. 185–221; Françoise De Bel-Air, "The Socio-Political Background and Stakes of Saudizing' the Workforce in Saudi Arabia: the Nitaqat Policy," *Gulf Labor Markets and Migration*, no. 3 (2015): pp. 3–23.

## Background of Saudi Education

Saudi Arabia's power is invested not so much in an individual but in the authority of one family: the Al-Sauds. While the monarchy functions as the state's ruling institution, the legitimacy of the Saudi state is grounded in the alliance between the Al-Saud family and the Wahhabi religious establishment. The symbiotic relationship between the Al-Sauds and the leading families of the clerical elite such as the Al-Shaikh family, allowed for the integration of Wahhabi ideology into the framework of the Saudi state. Modernization under King Faisal (1964–75) allowed the kingdom to retain a connection to its tribal culture while formalizing links with the Wahhabi clerical elite (*'ulama*).

The Saudi education system was therefore founded on the alliance between the Al-Saud family and the influential Wahhabist clerics. This substantively impacted the initial curriculum and textbooks provided to Saudi schoolchildren, proliferating an intolerant and reactionary expression of Islam. When applied to the Saudi curriculum, it taught students to be highly suspicious of foreigners and other religions.

After the September 11 attacks by terrorists, the United States and its allies demanded educational reform.<sup>20</sup> But the alliance between the Saudi family and the Wahhabis remained strong, having endured on and off since the mid-eighteenth century. The Saudi family provided leadership, a military force and Arab-Bedouin heritage, while the Wahhabis offered a convenient belief system that gave discipline and unity for the various tribes who were encouraged—by choice or by force—to participate in the Saudi state. This unity of previously disparate elements was, for a time, able to safeguard Saudi Arabia from secular ideologies ranging from radical pan-Arabism to democracy. A third element supporting the Saudi rule was economic, initially from Western support (Britain, the United States) and then the huge bonanza of oil, discovered and developed by the West.

Bolstered by oil revenues and the subjugation of other tribes, Saudi Arabia achieved regional success—and to the extent of control it held over OPEC decisions—became an international force. An orthodox and often radical education prepared the Saudi population to internalize this version of Saudi identity.

But there were drawbacks. The narrowness of education allowed social tensions to linger.<sup>21</sup> The inherent extremism of the Wahhabi-centered worldview, together with seemingly endless

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[https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/34857/GLMM\\_ExpNote\\_03\\_2015.pdf](https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/34857/GLMM_ExpNote_03_2015.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> Charles M. Sennott, "Saudi Schools Fuel Anti-US Anger," *The Boston Globe*, March 4, 2002, [http://archive.boston.com/news/packages/underattack/news/driving\\_a\\_wedge/part2.shtml](http://archive.boston.com/news/packages/underattack/news/driving_a_wedge/part2.shtml).

<sup>21</sup> Roula Baki. "Gender-Segregated Education in Saudi Arabia: Its Impact on Social Norms and the Saudi Labor Market," *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 12, no. 28, (June 17, 2004), <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ852310.pdf>;

Tribal forces are still powerful. Sebastian Maisel, "The New Rise of Tribalism in Saudi Arabia," *Nomadic Peoples*, special issue, 18, no. 2, "Reshaping Tribal Identities in the Contemporary Arab World," (2014): pp. 100–22.

resources likely accelerated the radicalization of segments of the Saudi population. Internal tensions and the fear of pan-Arabism led the Saudis to export their education to the Arab and Muslim worlds.

With the 9/11 attacks, the flaws of Saudi education were conspicuously exposed. Osama bin Laden and the majority of Al Qaeda terrorists were Saudi citizens. Saudi Arabia's religious education system and its underlying extremist Wahhabism were accused of contributing to anti-Western values and for providing fertile ground for Islamist extremism.<sup>22</sup> Research into the problem exposed the gravity of the situation.<sup>23</sup> US President George W. Bush designated Saudi Arabia as a "country of particular concern" in 2004, pursuant to the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.<sup>24</sup>

For more than fifteen years Saudi Arabia made limited progress toward removing intolerant content in state-published textbooks, particularly in elementary education. Examinations of the curriculum found less anti-Jewish and anti-Christian material.<sup>25</sup> There was also less anti-Shiite and anti-Sufi content taught in elementary schools.<sup>26</sup> However, problematic content remained.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Michaela Prokop, "Saudi Arabia: The Politics of Education," *International Affairs*, 79, no. 1 (January 2003): pp. 77–89.

<sup>23</sup> Arnon Groiss, "The West, Christians and Jews in Saudi Arabian Schoolbooks," IMPACT-se (CMIP), Jan. 2003, <https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/SA2003.pdf>;

Freedom House, "Saudi Arabia's Curriculum of Intolerance," Center for Religious Freedom of Freedom House and the Institute of Gulf Affairs, 2006,

<https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/CurriculumOfIntolerance.pdf>;

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<https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/SA2008.pdf>;

CRF, "Ten Years On: Saudi Arabia's Textbooks Still Promote Religious Violence," September 16, 2011, Hudson Institute Center for Religious Freedom,

<https://www.hudson.org/content/researchattachments/attachment/931/sauditextbooks2011final.pdf>;

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<https://www.adl.org/media/12180/download>.

<sup>24</sup> Representative Ted Poe, "Saudi Educational Transparency and Reform Act," H.R. 4549, introduced Dec 5, 2017, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/4549/text>.

<sup>25</sup> Anti-Defamation League: "Teaching Hate and Violence: Problematic Passages from Saudi State Textbooks for the 2018–19 School Year," *ADL International Affairs* (November 2018): p. 7.

<sup>26</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Saudi Arabia: Religion Textbooks Promote Intolerance. Textbooks Disparage Sufi, Shia; Label Christians, Jews 'Unbelievers,'" September 13, 2017,

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/09/13/saudi-arabia-religion-textbooks-promote-intolerance>.

<sup>27</sup> Problematic content includes violence or incitement to violence; hatred of the Other; and radical, inappropriate or disturbing content.

According to the Department of State's August 2017 International Religious Freedom Report, "[t]he government continued to distribute revised textbooks, although some intolerant material remained in circulation, particularly at the high school level, including content justifying the execution of 'sorcerers'" and the social exclusion of non-Muslims.

Saudi textbooks have been exported internationally, including to countries in the Middle East, Africa, South, Central, and South East Asia, and parts of Europe and North America.<sup>28</sup>

While American pressure has been important, other factors have contributed toward the reduction of incitement in Saudi Arabia's educational system. Beyond endangering others, the radical education that was once acceptable now threatens the new Saudi educational system itself. Changes in energy markets, the region's instability, the rise of radical enemies such as Iran, the prospects of America gradually leaving the Middle East and internal social and economic challenges have convinced the Saudi leadership that reform across all sectors of society is necessary for the kingdom's survival.

In April 2016, a new plan was finally announced by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to reduce the economy's dependence on oil by boosting private sector investment.<sup>29</sup> From the perspective of the Saudi curriculum, Saudi Vision 2030 is meant to galvanize the kingdom by opening up society and redefining the concept of citizenship in the Saudi homeland.<sup>30</sup> Although Vision 2030 is designed to modernize Saudi Arabia, it should be seen more as an evolutionary step in a conservative context, rather than as a revolutionary leap. Classic Saudi reference points such as Wahhabi Islam and rule by the royal family remain.

The socio-economic program focuses on three areas: the status of the kingdom as the "heart of the Arab and Islamic world"; the determination to become a center for global investment; and to use the kingdom's geographic location as a hub connecting Africa, Asia and Europe. As described across the curriculum, the plan provides renewed ideological infrastructure for the country, with its openness to foreign investment with a flexible view as to how things should unfold. Students are taught to cherish both national and individual identities, but learn to work with foreigners, welcome tourism, be involved in the workforce, and display entrepreneurship.<sup>31</sup>

This **IMPACT-se** interim research is based on a thorough inquiry into 209 Saudi Arabian primary and secondary school textbooks from the years 2016–19, and the insights they offer into the wider goals of the kingdom to remake, transform and modernize its culture for the

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<sup>28</sup> Representative Ted Poe, "Saudi Educational Transparency and Reform Act," 2017; see also IMPACT-se report on "Islamic Education in North America," <https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/Between-Sharia-and-Democracy-NA.pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> Kinninmont, "Vision 2030," 2017.

<sup>30</sup> "Full Text of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030." *Saudi Gazette*, April 26, 2016, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/features/2016/04/26/Full-text-of-Saudi-Arabia-s-Vision-2030.html>.

<sup>31</sup> *History*, Grades 10–12, 2019, p. 7.

changing realities of the twenty-first century. Our textbook study has detected subtle, yet substantive changes in the language, tone, narrative and outlook of the curriculum. There are clearly efforts made to describe, analyze and portray the Other with less hostile and destructive rhetoric than in previous curricula. Yet, there has not been a wholesale elimination of problematic content<sup>32</sup> or language.

Five categories will be examined in this report: Islamic studies; the Saudi family and the changing role of Saudi women; national identity, particularly through history, language, geography and art; exploring Saudi Arabia and the Middle East in terms of moderation and radicalism; and the crafting of a new Saudi civic ethos. Each of these particular topics will be analyzed through a review of examples from the curriculum and will conclude with an analysis of the new shift in the kingdom's educational strategy.

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<sup>32</sup> Problematic content includes violence or incitement to violence; hatred of the Other; and radical, inappropriate or disturbing material.

## The Role of Islam (Islamic Studies)

The Wahhabi branch of Sunni Islam is the state religion in Saudi Arabia. Not all Saudis adhere to the Wahhabi creed, but the country is committed to this worldview. The curriculum, accordingly, follows this path.

### Primary/Intermediate School

The Wahhabi view of Islam is evident throughout primary and intermediate school textbooks. The principle of *tawhid* (oneness [of Allah], monotheism—a pillar of Islam particularly central to Wahhabism) constitutes a central theme of the curriculum.

Tawhid is also associated with national identity (the *shahada* in the Saudi flag: "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger"). A raised index finger (*al-musabbiha*) can represent many things, including a symbol of tawhid. When adopted by ISIS, it also denoted victory and radical intolerance, "the *jihadi* equivalent of a gang sign."<sup>33</sup>

**تمهيد**




التَّوْحِيدُ هُوَ الْأَسَاسُ لِجَمِيعِ الْأَعْمَالِ  
فَلَا يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ أَيَّ عَمَلٍ بَدُونَهُ، وَأَهْلُ  
التَّوْحِيدِ هُمُ أَهْلُ السَّعَادَةِ فِي الدُّنْيَا  
وَالْآخِرَةِ، فَمَا التَّوْحِيدُ؟

**تَعْرِيفُ التَّوْحِيدِ**

إِفْرَادُ اللَّهِ فِي رُبُوبِيَّتِهِ وَالْوَهْبِيَّةِ وَأَسْمَائِهِ وَصِفَاتِهِ.

### Preface

Tawhid is the basis for all actions. Allah does not accept any deed without it. The people of tawhid will find happiness in this life and the next. What then, is tawhid?

### Definition of Tawhid

Singling out Allah in His divinity, deity, names and attributes.

***Tawhid* (Oneness [of Allah]), Grade 4, Vol. 1, 2019, p. 8.**

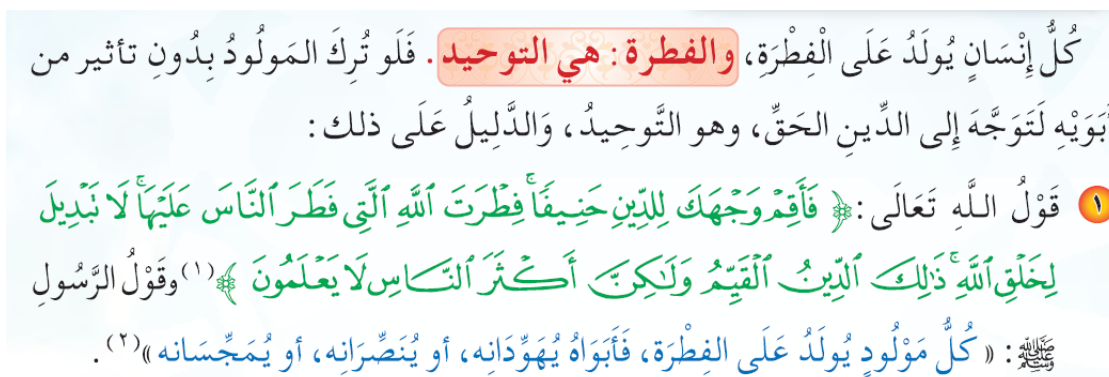
<sup>33</sup> Nathaniel Zelinsky, "ISIS Sends a Message: What Gestures Say about Today's Middle East," *Foreign Affairs*, September 3, 2014,

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2014-09-03/isis-sends-message>  
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2014-09-03/isis-sends-message>



Saudi fourth-graders are offered numerous religion courses through various textbooks: *Tawhid*; *Hadith* (Prophetic Traditions); *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence); and *Holy Qur'an*. Religious messaging is also taught through other subjects.

The 2018 textbook quotes a Qur'anic verse and a hadith to demonstrate that all people are born with an innate instinct for tawhid, i.e., being Muslims. Children raised as Christians, Jews or Zoroastrians lose their natural proclivity for Islam. Interestingly, the footnote to this particular hadith is found in a section on "Children of the Polytheists"; perhaps to remove any misunderstanding, this comment is not included in the 2019 edition.



Every human is born with the instinct, and the instinct is tawhid. If the newborn is left alone without any influence from their parents he would choose the true religion [*al-din al-haqq*, Islam], which is tawhid. And the proof is:

Allah says: 'So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the *fitrah* [instinct] of Allah upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know' [Sura Rum 30: 30].<sup>34</sup>

And the words of the Prophet: 'All are born with the instinct [of Islam], then their parents make them Jewish, or Christian, or *Majus* [Zoroastrian].'

***Tawhid*, Grade 4, Vol. 1, 2018, p. 11.**

The above text is typically understood to convey the message that Islam is the innate or true religion, while the other monotheistic faiths—Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism<sup>35</sup>—include distortions. In other words, children are being separated from the true faith by their parents. Admittedly, the hadith also conveys the message that not being Muslim is not anyone's

<sup>34</sup> Meaning: "rendition,"  
<https://quran.com/30/30/>.

<sup>35</sup> Zoroastrianism is fundamentally dualistic, but was recognized by Islam as monotheistic. Having a prophet and a book, the believers were granted the status of *dhimmi*, the legal condition offering "at least nominal safety as a religious minority" in some Muslim societies. Not all Muslims recognized Zoroastrians as a *dhimmi* community. Jamsheed K. Choksy, "Zoroastrianism ii, Historical Review: from the Arab Conquest to Modern Times," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2015,  
<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/zoroastrianism-02-arab-conquest-to-modern>.



personal fault, but a result of their upbringing, which blocks them from reaching the "true religion."

The same message remains in 2019. However, the Qur'anic verse is not included. Also erased are the words in the footnote connecting this hadith to the polytheists. This is a minor change, but in the right direction of accepting the Other.

### الإنسان يُولَدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ

كُلُّ إِنْسَانٍ يُولَدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ، وَالْفِطْرَةُ: هِيَ التَّوْحِيدُ. فَلَوْ تَرَكَ الْمَوْلُودُ بِدُونِ تَأْثِيرٍ مِنْ أَبَوَيْهِ لَتَوَجَّهَ إِلَى الدِّينِ الْحَقِّ، وَالدَّلِيلُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ:  
قَوْلُ الرَّسُولِ ﷺ: «كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُولَدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ، فَأَبَوَاهُ يُهَوِّدَانِهِ، أَوْ يُنَصِّرَانِهِ، أَوْ يُمَجِّسَانِهِ»<sup>(١)</sup>. أي يجعلانه يهوديا أو نصارانيا أو مجوسيا.

Every human is born with the instinct, and the instinct is tawhid. If the newborn is left alone without any influence from their parents he would choose the true religion [*al-din al-haqq*, Islam], which is tawhid. And the proof is:

And the words of the Prophet: 'All are born with the instinct [of Islam], then their parents make them Jewish, or Christian, or *Majus* [Zoroastrian].'

**Tawhid, Grade 4, Vol. 1, 2019, p. 9.**

The curriculum appears to waver in the attempt to moderate content. For example, the use of the term "non-Muslims" in a 2018 textbook is changed to polytheists in the 2019 edition. In some instances, texts refer to "new polytheism" or "greater polytheism" to describe practices indirectly assigned to Shiites, Sufis or various tribespeople.<sup>36</sup>

More directly, the term "polytheists" denotes the pre-Islamic dwellers of the Arabian Peninsula, both credited in this textbook for believing in the one God, but also worshipping "idols, the sun, the moon and the graves of the righteous and other deities."<sup>37</sup> Because worshipping the "graves of the righteous" could also be interpreted as indirectly criticizing present-day practices, the term was removed from the 2019 edition along with "non-Muslims."<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> *Tawhid*, Grade 4, Vol. 2, 2019, p. 31; *Tawhid 3*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019, p. 18.

<sup>37</sup> *Tawhid*, Grade 4, Vol. 1, 2018, p. 22.

<sup>38</sup> *Tawhid*, Grade 4, Vol. 1, 2019, p. 23.



**Lesson Five:** The Position of Non-Muslims on the Oneness of Divinity.

**Tawhid, Grade 4, Vol. 1, 2018, p. 22.**



**Lesson Five:** The Position of Polytheists on the Oneness of Divinity.

**Tawhid, Grade 4, Vol. 1, 2019, p. 23.**

While there is no direct attack on Christians and Jews, the assumption is that only Muslims are true monotheists. For example, one punishment to those who pray to other divinities is that they no longer belong to the Islamic nation (*millat al-Islam*).<sup>39</sup> This warning remains in the 2019 edition, but the contrast is posited between Muslims and polytheists.

Falling into the sin of polytheism (*shirk*), will send one to eternity in the fire of hell if he or she does not repent: "He who worships anyone but Allah is defined as *mushrik* [practicing idolatry or polytheism] and will belong to hell in the afterlife."<sup>40</sup> The threat is directed to the Saudi student, but tacitly presents a negative image of those following non-Abrahamic religions and worldviews.

Islamic worship is the only true form of worship, including rituals such as prayer, *Zakat* (alms-giving) and fasting. For this to be accepted by God, it should match the double condition of loyalty to Allah and following the way of Prophet Muhammed. Implicitly, the message conveyed is that God will not listen to non-Muslim acts of worship.

<sup>39</sup> *Tawhid*, Grade 4, Vol. 1, 2018, p. 24.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.



### Conditions for Worship Acceptance:

Loyalty only to Allah

Following the Messenger

**Tawhid, Grade 4, Vol. 1, 2018, p. 33.**

Anti-Sufi and anti-Shiite indoctrination endures in the curriculum, although indirectly, with extensive warnings against those practicing prayer in holy shrines, popular with some Sufis and folk religions.



### Lesson Four: Glorification of Graves and Using Them as Mosques (2)

Those using graves as mosques are evil of nature in the view of Allah.

**Tawhid, Grade 7, Vol. 2, 2019, p. 24.**

As early as the first grade, the Saudi curriculum seeks to strengthen a student's Islamic identity through the study of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). A comparison between Muslims and non-Muslims define the contours of their disparate identities. The Saudi Islamic community is represented as the correct way; but the question of Others is left unanswered.

الوحدة الأولى

الأطعمة والأشربة

١- للمسلم خصائص يتميز بها عن غيره، ومنها ما يتعلق بطعامه وشرابه، حدد ثلاثاً من هذه الخصائص، مقارناً ذلك بغير المسلمين:

ما يخص به المسلم	حال غير المسلمين
١	
٢	
٣	

ب- لماذا وجدت هذه الفروق بين المسلم وغيره؟

### Food and Drink

- A. Muslims have characteristics distinguishing them from others, including those related to their food and drink. Select three of these characteristics and compare them with the non-Muslims.
- B. Why are there these differences between Muslims and others?

***Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence), Grade 9, Vol. 1, 2019, p.8.***

Here the textbook on jurisprudence emphasizes differences between Muslims and the rest of the world. Question B asks: "why"? The sharia rules of dining are explained extensively, which, according to the text, is to facilitate worshipping Allah. There is no discussion of Others or whether they worship God.



The textbook emphasizes that all drugs (including alcoholic beverages and cigarettes) are prohibited, yet they are still easily found throughout the kingdom. In presenting the issue of intoxication, the curriculum seeks to establish a religious and moral basis to prevent the use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco.

### Alcoholic Beverages

***Fiqh, Grade 9, Vol. 1, 2019, p. 18.***

The textbook does not discuss what non-Muslims living in Saudi Arabia do in the privacy of their homes. While the curriculum is intensely religious and strict, there is no particular animosity toward foreigners and non-Muslims.

Indeed, the textbook also approaches the topic of imported food from non-Islamic sources, suggesting on-going cooperation between Muslims and non-Muslims.



Food Imported from Non-Muslims

***Fiqh*, Grade 9**, Vol. 1, 2019, p.35.

The textbook provides religious information for safely consuming food that is imported from non-Muslim countries with the main concern relating to giving alms (*zakat*) and the proper preparation of meat (halal), by one who belongs to the People of the Book (*kitabi*). This term typically relates to Christians or Jews, but is not explained in this context. Also unmentioned is that kosher food is considered halal, acceptable to Muslims.

There is also an extensive discussion about elements prohibited by sharia law such as certain types of hunting and fishing, cruelty to animals and whatever is harmful to the environment. Considering the centrality of religion for the Saudi people, this is noteworthy. The textbook also lists the types of food that may be exported from non-Muslims if prepared according to Islamic law.<sup>41</sup>

The elementary school textbooks grant some implicit legitimacy to non-Muslim Others (especially Christians and Jews). The desired Islamic-tawhidi identity is represented as the only true way, but does not overtly denigrate other worldviews; yet polytheism is reviled. Strong similarities between the Abrahamic religions is avoided, but purchasing food from non-Muslims in general is discussed.

### High School

Islamic studies are exclusively taught to male students in Saudi Arabia's high schools (Grades 10–12). Subjects include jurisprudence (*fiqh*), Allah's monotheism (*tawhid*) and Qur'anic Commentary (*tafsir*).

The *Islamic Studies* textbooks differ from the other books taught in these classes. Even the introductory textbooks (e.g., Level 1) are comprehensive in their analysis of religious legal matters and include numerous examples on the intricacies of Islamic law. Students are exposed

<sup>41</sup> *Fiqh*, Grade 9, Vol. 1, 2019, p.35

to the legal basis of Islamic jurisprudence. This approach to education is not liberal, but the accumulated knowledge of legal principles and cases *may* allow students to withstand radical propaganda.<sup>42</sup>

Hadith and Islamic studies highlight the ideal of the "Middle Way," [*Al-Wasatiyyah*], with a special emphasis on educating students to be religiously moderate and to avoid extremism.

والوسطية: هي اتباع الصراط المستقيم الذي هو وسط بين الإفراط والتفريط، وبين الغلو والتقصير:  
﴿أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۝ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ۝﴾<sup>(١)</sup>.

The Middle Way [*wasatiyyah*]: is to follow the straight path, which is the middle between excessive and negligence, and between exaggeration and deficiency. 'Guide us to the straight path. The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray.' (Al-Fatiha 1: 6–7)

***Hadith and Islamic Culture 3, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019, p. 157.***

By relying on Qur'anic verses and the hadith, the textbooks support the idea that Islam is the middle way between exaggeration and avoidance. Such moderation brings peace, security, strength and stability and prevents internal rifts within society. This reflects the approach of the

Saudi royal family and King Abdullah to allow a relatively open discourse while circumventing any potential violence.

*Jihad* is thoroughly discussed in high school.<sup>43</sup> Since *jihad* war is inseparable from Wahhabi Islam, the curriculum handles this sensitive topic by delving into the complexity of the legal and moral issues associated with *jihad*. Numerous limitations are presented regarding the application of *jihad*—particularly the requirement that the sole authority to declare *jihad* war in Saudi Arabia is the king (the ultimate imam). The following summarizes some of the legal principles taught in the Saudi curriculum:

- *Jihad* is theologically eternal, but not absolute. It is conditioned and restricted: it is permitted only by the authority of the ruler; must be performed under one unified flag only; and should be used only if feasible. This reflects the Saudi regime's attitude toward governing, avoiding anarchy and maintaining internal stability.
- *Jihad* is generally portrayed as a communal obligation (*fardh kifayah*), which means an obligation allowing others to participate on the community's behalf. (Radical organizations such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS, who openly challenge the legitimacy of the Saudi monarch much like the Ikhwan Revolt [1928–30], would argue that *jihad* is an individual duty [*fardh 'ayn*]. Each Muslim must fight at all times.)

<sup>42</sup> *Fiqh and its Principles 4, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019.*

<sup>43</sup> *Hadith and Islamic Culture 3, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019, pp. 177–87.*



- Living for the sake of Allah (*al-hayat fi sabil Allah*) is much greater than dying for the sake of Allah (*al-maut fi sabil Allah*).
- There are cases in which performing *jihad* is forbidden: if Muslims are unable to fight; if there is a clear interest not to fight; and if there is a peace agreement between the Muslims and the Infidels.
- Committing suicide is strictly forbidden and is not considered to be *jihad*.
- Expressing enthusiasm to fight without having proper religious knowledge brings bad consequences.
- The security forces are those who are responsible for securing peace in society; they are trained to do so and the citizens must respect and obey them. A citizen must notify the security forces about anything which might cause harm, corruption and terrorism.
- When a Muslim is not sure whether a situation of *jihad* exists, he must consult with (government approved) clerics and must not act upon his own opinion or his own tendencies.<sup>44</sup>

In a 2017 textbook, the definition of *jihad* war was predominantly religious: "Making an effort to fight the infidels and the unjust."<sup>45</sup> In 2019, *jihad's* definition assumes a more nationalistic character as part of the defense apparatus: "Fighting the enemies, and defending religion, the country and the worshippers."<sup>46</sup>

The idea of calling "infidels" to the faith and fighting them was present in a number of books in 2017. This still remains in at least one textbook.<sup>47</sup> In another, instead of "infidels," the call is directed to "non-Muslims"<sup>48</sup>; and any calls to the faith and fighting were removed from the textbook.<sup>49</sup>

The centrality of *jihad* war in Islam remains uncontested. It is described as the climax of the Islamic faith, just like the camel's hump.

الجهاد في سبيل الله ذروة سنام الإسلام، وقد فرضه الله صداً لكل من يتربص  
بالمسلمين الدوائر، مما يحتم الاستعداد التام، والتهيؤ للنفير في كل لحظة، إذا دعا ولي  
الأمر لذلك.

*Jihad* in the way of Allah is the climax of Islam [the peak of the hump of Islam]. Allah has mandated it to oppose anyone who lurks in the flanks of Muslims, which requires overall readiness and preparation for mobilization at any moment, if the ruler calls for it. **Tafsir 1, Grades 10–12** (Joint Track), 2019, p. 96.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 177–87.

<sup>45</sup> *Hadith and Islamic Culture 3*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2017-18, p. 177.

<sup>46</sup> *Hadith and Islamic Culture 3*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019, p. 177.

<sup>47</sup> *Tawhid 5*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Science and Administration), 2019, p. 152.

<sup>48</sup> *Hadith and Islamic Culture 5*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Science and Administration), 2019, p. 125.

<sup>49</sup> *Hadith 2*, Grades 10–12, (Humanities), 2018, p. 197.

There are significant limits on the implementation of *jihad* war: only the ruler has authority to lead the *jihad*. In the recent 2019 edition the text is even stricter and specifies that the imam leading the *jihad* war is only King Salman bin Abdulaziz.<sup>50</sup>

١- أن الجهاد مرتبط بإذن ولي الأمر.

٢- أن التخلف عن الجهاد الواجب، والاعتذار بأعذار كاذبة علامة من علامات النفاق.

٧- قوله ﴿لَمْ أَذِنَ لَهُمْ﴾ وقوله ﴿لَا يَسْتَزِدُّكَ﴾ دليل على أهمية إذن الإمام في أمور الجهاد والإمام في هذه البلاد هو خادم الحرمين الشريفين الملك سلمان بن عبد العزيز حفظه الله.

1. *Jihad* depends on the permission of the ruler [*wali al-amr*].
  2. Failure to serve in mandatory *jihad* and false excuses is one of the signs of hypocrisy.
  7. His words [Allah's words in the Qur'an] 'for what you permitted them' and 'will not permit to you' are proof of the importance of the imam's approval of *jihad* matters. The imam of this country is King Salman bin Abdulaziz, the servant of the two holy places.
- Tafsir 1, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, pp. 97–98.**

The following excerpt reflects the more restrained and controlled perspective of *jihad* within the Saudi curriculum. In that sense it tries to model the Prophet who died in his bed and the message that life for Allah is more important than death for Allah. It is worth noting, however, that this topic was discussed more extensively in the 2017 edition of the book.<sup>51</sup>

### من فقه الجهاد في الإسلام

- ١ نبي الرحمة، وقد مكث عشر سنين بعد أن أقام دولة الإسلام بالمدينة، ومع ذلك لم يثأر من أشد أعدائه خصومة له بعد أن تمكن منهم و هم أهل مكة؛ بل كان همُّه نشر هداية الإسلام وتعبيد الناس لربهم، وكما كان ﷺ عظيمًا في رحمته بالناس؛ فقد كان عظيمًا في استعدادة للحرب؛ عظيمًا في خططه؛ عظيمًا في تحقيق النصر واستثماره.
- ٢ الحياة في سبيل الله أعظم من الموت في سبيله، وقد مات رسول الله ﷺ على فراشه، بعدما عاش حياته كلها في سبيل الله، فالحياة في سبيل الله هي الأصل.

### Jurisprudence of *Jihad* in Islam [examples]

1. The Prophet of Mercy [was forced] to stay in Medina for ten years after the establishment of the Islamic State. Yet, he did not take revenge against his staunchest enemies from among the people of Mecca after he overpowered them.

<sup>50</sup> See also: *Hadith 2*, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019, p. 182.

<sup>51</sup> *Hadith and Islamic Culture 3*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2017, p. 183.



His only concern was to spread the guidance of Islam and make the people worship their God. He displayed greatness in his compassion toward people; he was great in his readiness for war; great in his plans; great in achieving victory and building upon it.

2. Life for the sake of Allah is greater than death in His way. The Messenger of Allah died in his bed after living all his life for the sake of Allah, because life for the sake of Allah is the essence.

**Hadith and Islamic Culture 3, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019, p. 183.**

An entire lesson "love of this world and hate of death."<sup>52</sup> The crux of the discussion is that this life is a corridor to the afterlife: "The world is a corridor, not a permanent home."<sup>53</sup> Fear of death means the fear of leaving the world too early before one "builds his [place in the] hereafter with good deeds."<sup>54</sup> Ignoring this may lead to a community that is weak since nobody is ready to sacrifice their lives in its defense. The corollary of such conduct will be weakness and exposure to greedy foreign powers.

٣. لَخَّصَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ السَّبَبَ الَّذِي أَوْجَبَ الذَّلَّ وَالْهَوَانَ وَالضَّعْفَ لِهَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ الْعَظِيمَةِ الْقَوِيَّةِ، فِي أَمْرٍ وَاحِدٍ هُوَ: «حُبُّ الدُّنْيَا»، الَّذِي أَثْمَرَ «كَرَاهِيَةَ الْمَوْتِ»، فَحُبُّ الدُّنْيَا وَالانْشَغَالُ بِهَا عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ وَتَقْدِيمُهَا عَلَيْهَا هُوَ سَبَبُ كُلِّ خَطِيئَةٍ؛ وَكُلُّ سَبَبٍ لَضَعْفِ الْأُمَّةِ وَتَفَرُّقِهَا رَاجِعٌ فِي الْحَقِيقَةِ إِلَى هَذَا السَّبَبِ، وَهَذَا مِنْ جَوَامِعِ كَلِمِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ وَبَدِيعِ حِكْمِهِ.

٤. دَلَّ الْحَدِيثُ عَلَى أَنَّ الْأُمَمَ عَلَى اخْتِلَافِ مِلَلِهَا وَأَدْيَانِهَا تَتَسَلَطُ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِينَ فِي حَالِ ضَعْفِهِمْ وَانْصِرَافِهِمْ لِلدُّنْيَا وَالْغَفْلَةِ عَنْ أَسْبَابِ الْقُوَّةِ.

The Prophet summarized the reason that caused the humiliation, degradation and weakness of this great and powerful nation, in one thing: 'love of this world,' which leads to 'hate of death.' Loving this world and being engaged in it over the hereafter giving it precedence over [the hereafter] is the root cause of every sin. The nation's weakness and discord are in fact due to this reason, and this emanates from the entirety of the Prophet's words.

The hadith indicates that nations regardless of its ethnicity or faith and will dominate over Muslims in the event of their weakness and devotion to this world and their neglect of its sources of power.

**Hadith and Islamic Culture 3, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019, p. 145.**

Proper life remains the center of Muslim activity.

٩. وَضَعُ الدُّنْيَا فِي مَوْضِعِهَا الصَّحِيحِ لَا يَعْنِي اجْتِنَابُهَا بِالْكُلِّيَّةِ؛ لِأَنَّ الْمُسْلِمَ مَأْمُورٌ بِعِمَارَةِ الْأَرْضِ وَاكتِشَافِ خَيْرَاتِهَا وَتَسْخِيرِهَا فِيمَا يَرْضَى الرَّبُّ جَلَّ وَعَلَا، وَالِاسْتِفَادَةَ مِنْهَا فِيمَا يَعُودُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَأُمَّتِهِ وَدِينِهِ بِالنَّفْعِ،

<sup>52</sup> *Hadith and Islamic Culture 3, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019, pp. 143–50.*

<sup>53</sup> *Hadith and Islamic Culture 3, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019, p. 146.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

Setting this world in its proper place does not mean avoiding it altogether, because the Muslim is commanded to build the land, discover its goods and use it in the way that pleases Allah. One should use [the land] and benefit from it in what is beneficial to himself, his nation, and his religion.

**Hadith and Islamic Culture 3, Grades 10–12**, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019, p. 146.

The textbook explains that there are circumstances "that compel Muslims to cease fighting their enemies."<sup>55</sup> This phrasing is pessimistic in the sense that Wahhabi Islam considers *jihad* war to be the norm, rather than the exception. As seen in the legal principles above, there are at least three cases introduced in the textbooks where *jihad* may not be performed: if Muslims are unable to fight; if there is a clear interest not to fight (in Saudi case determined by the king and for a variety of reasons such as a concern over damage to the community or an opportunity to spread Islam in peaceful ways); and when there is a binding agreement between Muslims and infidels (*kuffar*—should be respected as long as it remains binding).

ج. وجود معاهدة بين المسلمين والكفار، فإنه لا يجوز للمسلمين نقضها، إلا إذا وجد ما يستدعي ذلك، من إخلال بالشروط التي بينهم، أو انتهاء مدة الصلح والمعاهدة، كما حدث في فتح مكة فإن سبب الفتح نقض كفار قريش لشروط صلح الحديبية.

**C. The existence of a treaty between Muslims and infidels (*kuffar*).** It is not permissible for Muslims to violate [the treaty], unless required [because the other side] breaches conditions existing between them, or the period of peace [*sulh*] and treaty ends, as happened in the conquest of Mecca. Then the reason for the conquest was that infidels of Quraysh breached Hudaibiyyah peace.

**Hadith and Islamic Culture 3, Grades 10–12**, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019, p. 184.

### Martyrdom for the Sake of Allah

The curriculum praises those who sacrifice their lives as martyrs (*shahid*, *shuhada*) for Allah, namely in battle for the faith.

يَتَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمُوتٌ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ

And do not say about those who are killed in the way of Allah, 'They are dead.' Rather, they are alive, but you perceive [it] not.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 184.

الشهداء في سبيل الله تعالى أحياء عند ربهم يرزقون، كما جاء في الحديث الصحيح: «إن أرواح الشهداء في حواصل طير خضر تسرح في الجنة حيث شاءت، ثم تأوي إلى قناديل معلقة تحت العرش» [رواه مسلم].

The martyrs (*shuhadha*) for the sake of Allah are alive with their Lord and fed by Him. As it said in the correct tradition [*hadith*]: The souls of the martyrs travel around in heaven in crops of green birds. They go wherever they wish and then find shelter in hanging lamps under the throne. (*Sahih Muslim*—hadith collection)

**Tafsir 2 (Qur'an Commentary), Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019, p. 76.**

٧- الشهادة في سبيل الله منحة ربانية، وكرامة إلهية، يهبها الله للصفوة من عباده.

7—Martyrdom for the sake of Allah is a godly gift, a divine dignity, granted by Allah to the best of His worshippers.

**Tafsir 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019, p. 136.**

### Friendship with Infidels

Within the current curriculum, the term "infidel" [*kuffar*] appears to relate mainly to Christians and Jews; with some exceptions,<sup>56</sup> direct references to them as infidels have been largely removed.

The curriculum still does not encourage friendship with non-Muslims.

١- تحريم موالاة الكافرين من دون المؤمنين، ولا يعني ذلك ظلمهم أو التعدي عليهم.

1. It is forbidden to befriend the infidels [*kuffar*] while excluding the believers, but this does not mean that it is allowed to oppress them or encroach upon them.

**Tafsir 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019, p. 116.<sup>57</sup>**

The Islamic textbooks warn against participating in the festivals of infidels.

• ومن أشد حالات التشبه بالكفار: مشاركة الكفار في أعيادهم، فإن ذلك من أعظمها شراً وضرراً، وأكثرها انتشاراً بين المسلمين، وهذه المشاركة محرمة، لما فيها من الموافقة لهم فيما ليس من ديننا، كما أن تلك الأعياد من البدع المحدثّة، وقد أثنى الله على عباده المؤمنين فوصفهم بقوله سبحانه: ﴿وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّورَ﴾.<sup>(٤)</sup>

<sup>56</sup> *Tawhid 5*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Science and Administration), 2019, p. 151–52; *Tawhid 1*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 165.

<sup>57</sup> For a similar content: *Tawhid 5*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019, p. 151; *Tawhid 5*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Science and Administration), 2018, p. 152.

One of the severe cases of imitating infidels is participating in their holidays. This practice is one of the most evil, damaging and popular among the Muslims. Such participation is forbidden because it contains agreement to what is not our religion. These festivals are new innovations, which Allah forbade on His believing worshipers and described them as "Those who witness no falsehood." (Furqan [The Criterion], 25: 72).<sup>58</sup>

***Tawhid 1, Grades 10–12*** (Joint Track), 2019, p. 165.

### Punishment in the Qur'an

High school students are taught that those (criminals) who oppose Allah and Muhammad, will be killed, crucified and have a hand and foot cut off<sup>59</sup> or be banished from the land; after dying they will suffer in Hell.

Indeed, the penalty for those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and strive upon earth [to cause] corruption is none but that they be killed or crucified or that their hands and feet be cut off from opposite sides or that they be exiled from the land. That is for them a disgrace in this world; and for them in the Hereafter is a great punishment [The Table, Al-Maida 5: 33].

***Tafsir 2, Grades 10–12*** (Humanities), 2019, pp. 61, 205.

In another textbook, the authors emphasize that preferring human (or positive law—*al-qanun al-wadh'i*) over sharia or doubting the more severe punishments (*hudud*) is considered infidelity (*kufir*).<sup>60</sup> The curriculum specifies some *hudud* punishments: stoning to death for a married fornicator (*zani*)<sup>61</sup> and capital punishment for apostasy (*ridda*).<sup>62</sup> But false accusations are grave sins.<sup>63</sup>

### Islam in Context

The Islamic material covered by the textbooks includes moderating elements, but also preserves much of the conservative tradition of Islam in Saudi Arabia. The context is important. Strict commitment to religious demands may take on a different meaning when applied to other issues or needs. The Saudi curriculum tries to balance a new modern interpretation of a decidedly "Saudi" Islam, one which embraces its pre-Islamic heritage as part of a wider Saudi ethos. The textbooks emphasize both the pre-and post-Islamic character of the state, solidifying a continuous Saudi narrative. Similarly, the role of the Arabic language is seen as a critical

<sup>58</sup> Qur'an: A. Yusaf Ali,  
<https://quranyusufali.com/25/>.

<sup>59</sup> "Saudi Beheads and Nails Murderer's Body to Cross," *News*, June 22, 2010,  
<https://www.news.com.au/breaking-news/saudi-beheads-and-nails-murderers-body-to-cross/news-story/ebc04ed5109f08ac266be78e3cfd22a6>.

<sup>60</sup> *Tawhid 1*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, pp. 160–61.

<sup>61</sup> *Fiqh 1*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 251.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> *Hadith and Islamic Culture 3*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019, pp. 133–34.

element teaching "Islamic-Arab cultural identity" to students, as highlighted in the introduction to the first-grade textbook.

وتُعدُّ مناهج اللغة العربية من أهم المناهج التعليمية؛ لدورها الجوهرية في تأكيد الهوية الثقافية الإسلامية العربية، وتعزيز الشخصية الوطنية السعودية.

The Arabic language programs of study are among the most important in the curriculum, because of their essential role in asserting the Islamic-Arab cultural identity and in strengthening the Saudi national character.

*My Language, Grade 1*, Vol. 1, 2019, p. 4.<sup>64</sup>

These particular ideas center on Saudi Arabia's Islamic heritage, but more significantly, place Islam in a more universal context. This is a noteworthy change in the internal Saudi discourse. In the primary and intermediate school textbooks, Saudi students are introduced to illustrations of pre-Islamic art—formerly an unthinkable proposition.

The enhanced pride in the kingdom's pre-Islamic heritage represents a major change in government policy. The Vision 2030 Plan outlines the ambitious goal of increasing tourism to nearly 10 percent of the kingdom's GDP by 2030. A significant part of this effort has been the preservation of pre-Islamic historical sites and is an important component bridging together Saudi Arabia's pre-Islamic past with its current modernizing efforts.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> The same quotation is also in other introductions. See: *My Beautiful Language*, Grade 4, Vol. 1, 2019, p. 4. Need?

<sup>65</sup> See Stephen Kalin, "Saudi Bid to Protect Pre-Islamic Sites Upends Religious Dictates" *Reuters*, July 9, 2018, <https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:3SVz9dv-wKgJ:https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-tourism/saudi-bid-to-protect-pre-islamic-sites-upends-religious-dictates-idUSKBN1JZ1PH+&cd=10&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=il&client=safari>.

## The Saudi Family and the Changing Role of Saudi Women

The foundations of Saudi society are based on tribal, familial and clan identity as well as religion. This is why family education in the textbooks remains a significant frame of reference which infuses all levels of the Saudi education system.

The unity of the Saudi family is a central tenet forming the basis for societal and social solidarity. The textbooks strongly emphasize the importance of respect for parents and the centrality of the family in one's life. As the strongest institution in Saudi culture the family continues to have a major influence on expectations and ambitions and is portrayed in the curriculum as the building block for wider social cohesion within Saudi society. Special emphasis is placed on family social interactions, including daily interactions with parents and other relatives on a daily basis—a level of interaction that might be considered remarkable for young adults in Western countries.

### Primary/Intermediate School

Elementary school textbooks introduce the family as the backbone of the social order along with Islam, which is included in all walks of life. Family education focuses primarily on girls. It underscores the importance of the family as a well-established and respected institution and the only one capable of providing students with the values necessary to embrace the new civic Saudi ethos.



The image represents the new national ideal. The message is that families should be religious and committed to clear gender roles. Manners and behavior follow. Arranged marriages are common in Saudi Arabia and polygamy is still practiced; yet there is scant mention of this in textbooks, and monogamy is the curriculum's default preference.

*Family Education, Grade 4, Vol. 2 (for Girls), 2017, p. 12.*

A high school history book teaches that the first family was the family of Adam and Eve and defines a family as a married man and a woman living under the same roof.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>66</sup> *History and National Education 2, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (Administration, Literature and Qur'an), 2019, pp. 114–16.*



In the image from a fifth-grade textbook, the father says that if everybody saves, they will be able to take an *umra* trip (pilgrimage to Mecca outside the official *hajj* season). The father makes the decision and the entire family helps to save money for the trip; the mother saves by hanging clothes instead of using an electric dryer and cooking more efficiently; the boy watches less TV and turns off appliances, the girl turns off lights. After the family saved money and traveled to Mecca, the father said: "We were able to use the money we saved for something good: to go on the Blessed *umra* pilgrimage."



Family members work together to save electricity

*Family Education, Grade 5, Vol. 1, (for Girls), 2019, p. 100.*<sup>67</sup>

<sup>67</sup> For more contrasting roles between boys and girls see also: *Family Education, Grade 2 (for Girls), 2019, pp. 45, 47; Social and National Studies, Grade 4, 2019, p. 75; Family Education, Grade 4 (for Girls), 2019, p. 44; Family Education (for Girls), Grade 5, 2019, pp. 37, 39.*

إنَّ الأخلاق الكريمة هي التي تمكّن الإنسان من العيش في مجتمعه محبوباً ومقبولاً، ولأجل الحصول على هذه الصفة لا بدّ من معرفة الآداب السلوكية التي يجب اتّباعها عند التعامل مع الآخرين وهي كالتالي:

Good manners help people living in the community to be loved and accepted. To acquire this [character trait] properly, we must acknowledge behavior etiquette while interacting with other people.

**Family Education, Grade 4, Vol. 2 (for Girls), 2017, p. 14.**

Close family relations are vital. Respect, interaction, help and sharing opinions form part of the culture.<sup>68</sup> The textbook points to various connections in society.

أي الصداقات التالية أقوى وأمتن، ولماذا في رأيك؟

- صداقة بُنيت وفق الدين والعقيدة.
- صداقة تَمَّت على أساس الثقافة.
- صداقة تجمعها الهوايات المشتركة.

Which of the following friendships is more powerful and durable, and why?

- A friendship constructed according to religion and belief.
- A friendship according to cultural basis.
- A friendship shared by mutual hobbies.

**Family Education, Grade 4, Vol. 2 (for Girls), 2017, p. 22.**

A follow up question asks "If convinced that all previous relationships are all strong . . . But which one of them keeps participants away from wrong behavior and why?" The question encourages critical thinking but within a fairly narrow context.

Gender roles are apparent in family functions. Female students are taught that family budgets are their responsibility and learn how to maintain family finances. The first line in the following passage presents the typical division in a Saudi Arabian household.

Here, the textbook also emphasizes the role of the woman, who must be prepared to learn a range of jobs to support the family:

<sup>68</sup> *Family Education, Grade 4, Vol. 2 (for Girls), 2019, p. 18.*



محمد رب أسرة مسؤول عن توفير المال اللازم لنفقاتهم، وزوجته سعاد تتحمل مسؤولية تدبير شؤون البيت فهي المدبر لميزانية البيت، بدءاً من إعدادها ثم تنفيذها ومتابعتها، فكانت تتعامل مع أبنائها بميزان الواقع لا بدافع الرغبة وحب تقليد الآخرين، فجعلت الترشيد في الإنفاق والاستهلاك من أهم خططها مع رضاها وقناعتها برزق الله وسعيها لتحقيق التوازن الداخلي لأسرتها من خلال:

Muhammad is head of the family and responsible for providing the money necessary for the family's expenses. His wife, Su'ad is responsible to manage the family's affairs and is in charge of the family budget. This includes preparing, following through and monitoring the budget. She works with her sons in a realistic manner not out of wishing to imitate others. Rationalizing spending and consumption are among her most important endeavors. She trusts Allah to provide and keeps inner balance in the family.

*Family Education, Grade 9, Vol. 2 (for Girls), 2018 , p. 35.*

The following image of a woman shopping mixes modernity and tradition.



This type of clothing (niqab) is common in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. Within the Saudi education system girls are not required to wear a niqab in primary and middle schools. Inserting such traditional dress into a ninth grade textbook shows the still prevailing religious orthodoxy, particularly with respect to women's dress.

*Family Education, Grade 9, Vol. 2 (for Girls), 2017, p. 42.*

### High School

Family and health education in the Saudi high school curriculum is discussed in female-centric textbooks. They cover Islamic issues and subjects but not dogmatically. The dominant colors used are pink, purple and light orange—emphasizing what is considered a lighter, more feminine tone and outlook.

Throughout all course levels (1–6), family and health education are divided into units with the ultimate goal of teaching female students to care for the health of an entire family. At each level, a unit is dedicated to food, nutrition and food security. As levels and ages increase, the issues and subjects become more complex. The first levels deal with food and vitamins. As grades increase the more advanced levels eventually provide a thorough analysis of the medical and physiological aspects and conditions that might affect various members of a family: infants, male and female teenagers, adults, elderly and those requiring special care.



**١ زيت الزيتون:**

يحتوي زيت الزيتون على دهون أحادية التشبع، والتي تمتلك خاصية رفع الكوليسترول الجيد بدون التأثير على الكوليسترول الكامل، ولكن يجب الانتباه للكمية المتناولة من زيت الزيتون في اليوم الواحد، حيث إن ملعقة الطعام الواحدة تعطي تقريباً (١٣٥) سعرة حرارية.



**٢ السمك:**

يحتوي السمك على الأحماض الدهنية أوميغا ٣ (omega3) التي تقلل من نسبة الدهون الثلاثية، وتقلل من تكتل الدم، فتتمنع الإصابة بالجلطات والأزمات القلبية الحادة. ومن أغنى أنواع السمك بالأحماض الدهنية (omega3) السلمون والتونا والرنجة.



**٣ الصويا:**

بروتين الصويا يقلل من نسبة الكوليسترول السيئ، ويرفع نسبة الكوليسترول الجيد، كما أنه يحتوي على مضادات الأكسدة المعروفة باسم (أيسوفلافون ( Isoflavon ) التي تقلل من خطر الإصابة بأمراض القلب).

**The first three of the ten best foods for heart health (olive oil, fish and soy)**

*Family and Health Education 4, Grades 10–12, Level 4 (for Girls), 2017, p, 27.*

The various levels studied by teenage girls represent the curriculum's attempt to create a proper balance between what is perceived femininity and Islamic and Saudi tradition. The girls are being taught that Islamic and Saudi values do indeed respect their desire to be beautiful and feminine, but that a "good female believer" is one who dresses and uses jewelry and accessories modestly, "in the proper way."<sup>69</sup>

<sup>69</sup> *Family Education*, Grade 6, Vol. 1 (for Girls), 2019, pp. 16, 21, 50.



Traditional clothing from various areas of Saudi Arabia. Female students should learn to identify the typical clothing of each area, thus combining conservative values and national awareness.

***Family Education, Grade 6, Vol. 1, (for Girls), 2019, p. 52.***

As girls continue their high school studies, they become more cognizant of the need to balance what represents somewhat of a paradox for women in Saudi society: behaving as a traditional wife and mother; respecting her extended family (especially the husband's); and how to support her nuclear family in the labor market or perhaps through her own business initiatives. This duality reflects the current environment in Saudi Arabia, where the religious establishment is intent that women maintain their traditional roles at home, while others such as the late King Abdullah and the current Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman, have sought to reform the woman's role in the family and wider Saudi society.

Female students are taught courses in such fields as nutrition, medicine, anatomy and business studies. Saudi women are increasingly seen as a vital element to grow the economy, as agents of change in various fields and in home businesses.

Since 2018, with the ability to drive, Saudi women are able to enter the workforce more easily. Note that a "family and health education" textbook, includes business administration, blurring the differences between stay-at-home housewife and entrepreneur.



Specific guidelines to enable the growth and success of home-based small businesses for young women.

*Family and Health Education 5, Grades 10–11, Level 5 (for Girls), 2017, p. 145.*

### The Changing Role of Saudi Women

Saudi textbooks for high school girls correspond with Vision 2030, where Saudi women are introduced as agents of change. The merits of entrepreneurship and innovation are seen by the Saudi government as tools to mobilize people and resources—crucial for the economic development of the kingdom. This taps into the abilities and talents of Saudi women, for whom entrepreneurship is becoming not only a powerful tool of empowerment, but also, represents a flexible and modern arrangement that enables them to balance work and traditional family responsibilities at home.

The books that teach Saudi teenage girls financial literacy as small business owners stand in contrast to Islamic studies books for boys. Such textbooks delve into the nuances of Islamic financial transactions involving a multitude of cases and variations, each referencing many Qur'anic verses and hadith. The textbooks for girls present financial concepts in a clear and practical manner. This contrast between the boys' and girls' textbooks appears to reflect the



current dichotomy within Saudi society, representing the need to counterbalance the demands of the religious establishment, while creating a parallel process of modernization based on the changes undertaken by Saudi leadership.

**شَرْطُ الْبَرَاءَةِ مِنْ كُلِّ عَيْبٍ**

يحدث أحياناً في بعض الأسواق - وبخاصة سوق الحراج على السلع - أن يشترط البائع على المشتري أنه بريء من كل عيب قد يظهر في السلعة بعد البيع؛ وذلك ليتجنب مطالبتة فيما بعد؛ فهل يصح هذا الشرط ويبرأ البائع من كل عيب يظهر في السلعة فيما بعد؟ أو يكون الشرط باطلاً، ويحق للمشتري رد السلعة، أو أخذ الأرض مقابل العيب؟

**لا يخلو الأمر من إحدى حالتين:**

الحالة الأولى: إذا كان المشتري يعلم بالعيب، وذلك بأن يخبره البائع بالعيب، أو يكون العيب ظاهراً يراه المشتري، مثل أن يقول البائع: السيارة ينقص زيتها، ويشترط البراءة من هذا العيب، فإنه يبرأ ولا يحق للمشتري أن يرد عليه السيارة من أجل هذا العيب.

الحالة الثانية: إذا لم يعلم المشتري بالعيب، واشترط البائع البراءة من كل عيب في السلعة، بأن يقول: أنا بريء من كل عيب تجده في السلعة، أو يقول له: أبيعك هذه السيارة على أنها كومة حديد، أو أبيعك هذا البيت على أنه كومة تراب، أو أبيعك هذه السيارة على أنها مكسرة محطمة، ونحو ذلك من العبارات التي يعلم مخالفتها للواقع لكن مراد البائع أن يقبل المشتري السلعة بما فيها من عيوب.

والحكم في هذه الحالة أن البائع إذا كان يعلم بالعيب عند البيع فكتمه، فإنه لا يبرأ من هذا العيب؛ لأنه غش وتدليس، وقد قال رسول الله ﷺ: «**مَنْ غَشَانَا فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي**»<sup>(1)</sup>، وبناء على ذلك فإذا وجد المشتري بها عيباً، فإنه يثبت له الخيار في إمساك السلعة، أو ردها بهذا العيب.

وإن كان البائع لا يعلم فالحكم أنه يبرأ من العيب؛ لأن الحق للمشتري وقد رضي بإسقاط حقه، والمؤمنون على شروطهم.

A typical page delves into specific conditions and guidelines to carry out a business transaction.

**Fig 2, Grades 10–12, Level 3, (Literature and Qur'an), 2017, p. 33.**

In level 4, the *Islamic Jurisprudence* textbook exposes the reader to the existing legal frameworks of Islamic family law and the advantages given men regarding inheritance laws. However, beneath the surface is a significant change: there is no mention of other wives—underscoring the decline of polygamy in Saudi society; this represents a serious challenge to Islamic tradition. The economic problems of recent years have made it more difficult to support additional wives; given that more women are assuming the roles of providers, fewer women are willing to tolerate such an environment.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Mariam Nabbout, "Arab Women Don't Accept Polygamy, and These Personal Stories Prove So," *Step Feed*, March 30, 2018,

<https://stepfeed.com/arab-women-don-t-accept-polygamy-and-these-personal-stories-prove-so-8312>.

## أهداف الوحدة

يتوقع منك - أخي الطالب - بعد دراسة هذه الوحدة أن :

- تبين أحوال الورثة من حيث الإرث بالفرض أو بالتعصيب أو بهما معاً.
- تشرح أحوال الأب والأم في الميراث وشروط كل حالة.
- توضح أحوال الجد والجدة في الميراث وشروط كل حالة.
- تحدد أحوال البنت في الميراث وشروط كل حالة.
- تفصل أحوال بنت الابن في الميراث وشروط كل حالة.
- تعدد أحوال الزوجين في الميراث وشروط كل حالة.
- تبين أحوال الإخوة لأم في الميراث وشروط كل حالة.
- توضح أحوال الأخت الشقيقة في الميراث وشروط كل حالة.
- تشرح أحوال الأخت لأب في الميراث وشروط كل حالة.
- تعطي أمثلة لكل حالة من حالات الورثة في الميراث.
- تستدل على كل حالة من حالات الورثة في الميراث.
- تستطيع إعطاء كل وارث ما يستحقه من الإرث حسب الشروط من خلال أمثلة تطبيقية

The student is expected to know the inheritance rights of each member of his immediate and extended family.

**Fiqh 3, Grades 10–12, Level 4 (Literature and Quran), 2017, p. 59.**

The following controversial Qur'anic passage, which includes striking one's wife, was in the 2017 curriculum and removed from the 2019 textbook; it highlights the willingness to introduce change to a Wahhabi-influenced society.

Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given [to be] one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand ([Nisa', Women].Sura 4:34)

The Sura is included in the previous edition along with an introduction that has no reference to beating women. The "man in charge" is simply advised to consult "external parties" if "the lighter way" to "correct" his wife does not yield the expected results.

لا تستقيم حياة الناس ، إلا برئاسة وإدارة ، ومعرفة كل فرد حدود صلاحياته ، والأسرة هي النواة الأولى لبناء المجتمع ، وتربية الأجيال ، والحفاظ على سمات الأمة وخصائصها ، وحمايتها من الضياع ؛ ولذا أسند الشارع رئاسة الأسرة ، وتوفير حاجاتها إلى الرجل ؛ لما منحه الله من ميزات وقدرات ، ويلفت القرآن الانتباه إلى المرأة الصالحة ، فهي الأطوع لربها ، والأسعد لزوجها وأسررتها ، والأقدر على القيام بمسؤولياتها .  
ومتى ما حصل خلل من شريكة الحياة ، فعلى الزوج أن يعالج ذلك بالأسلوب الأمثل ، ممتدداً بالأخف فإن عجز وسط أطرافاً خارجية؛ حتى يدرأ الطلاق ، ويدفع انهيار الأسر .

People's lives will never be honest and straightforward with no ruler and management. Everyone should know the limits of their powers. The family is the first nucleus for building society, educating generations, preserving the nation's qualities and characteristics and protecting it from a fall. That is why the author of sharia assigned the family's ruler and provision to the man. Allah has granted man merits and capabilities. And the Qur'an draws attention to the good woman, who is the most obedient to her Lord, the happiest for her husband and family and the best in fulfilling her responsibilities.

Once if there is a dysfunction with the female life partner, the husband should address it in the best manner, starting with the lighter way. And if this fails, he should resort to external parties; so as to ward off divorce, and avoid the family's collapse.

**Tafsir 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2017, p. 173.**

And yet, on the next page, the 2017 textbook presents the context and advantages of beatings in family life, further confusing where the curriculum really stands on the issue of wife-beating.

٤- التفطن إلى أن الضرب وسيلة من وسائل التأديب، لقوله تعالى: ﴿وَأَصْرِيْهُنَّ﴾ وقوله ﷺ: «مروا أولادكم بالصلاة وهم أبناء سبع سنين، واضربوهم عليها وهم أبناء عشر» رواه أبو داود، ولكنه غير مبرح كما قال ابن عباس: (بالسواك ونحوه) رواه ابن جرير. وإنما يجوز الضرب عند الضرورة، وفي حالات معينة، وإذا استنفدت كل الوسائل التي دونه ولم تفد شيئاً، فيلجأ إليه لتقويم الاعوجاج، وعلاج النشوز.

Attention [women,] to the fact that beating is a means of discipline, for the Almighty said: 'Beat them [the women].' For Allah's saying: 'Order your children to pray when they are seven years old; and beat them for that when they are ten.' (Hadith narrated by Abu Dawood.)

But not severe [beating]. Ibn Abbas said: 'with such as a twig toothpick.' (Hadith narrated by Ibn Jarir). It is permissible to beat when necessary, and in certain cases, and if all other means have been exhausted to no avail, he will resort to [beating] to correct the crookedness and cure wifely rebellion (*nushuz*).

**Tafsir 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2017, p. 174.**

Discussion of beating women was removed from the new curriculum, while another textbook added positive elements in relation to the role of women:



ما الملحوظ على إجابة أحمد؟

- **Nora:** 'I think adding study material for an economics course is a positive thing.'
- **Ahmad:** 'What is this opinion? Who are you to express such an opinion'!!!

**What is noteworthy in Ahmad's answer?**

*Social Studies and Civics, Grade 7, Vol. 1, 2019, p. 97.*

Clearly, this cartoon sides conspicuously with the female-student, and forms part of a new lesson on dialogue.<sup>71</sup> There is a change in attitude from the rigid religious textbook in which the role of the male family head is to dominate his wife and beat her "if necessary"—to the idea that dialogue should be used to foster an exchange of ideas on equal footing. Ultimately this led to women being allowed to drive.



The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz, issued a high order to allow women to drive beginning June 24, 2018.

*Family Education, Grade 2, Vol. 1 (for Girls), 2019, p. 32.*

<sup>71</sup> "Lesson 13: The Concept of Dialogue," *Social Studies and Civics, Grade 7, Vol. 1, 2019, pp. 96–99.*



But still, the attitude toward the role of women in society is nuanced. While strict orthodox limits remain, there are encouraging messages of empowerment. One example is a royal decree mandating the Saudi Consultative Assembly include thirty women.<sup>72</sup> But a woman's work should be conducted within limits. Jobs should be "suitable" for a woman's "moral character." Women should not flaunt or over-adorn; not be alone with a foreign man; be chaste; and preserve the family honor. A woman must receive permission of her guardian for marriage, but denying her marriage to an appropriate man is prohibited.<sup>73</sup> The textbook also warns women that while forcing a girl to marry against her will is prohibited, if she does not protest it would likely be interpreted as consent.<sup>74</sup> Female students are therefore encouraged to speak and protect their rights, despite the obvious limitations. Once a woman is married, the husband's permission should still be sought for many things. But, interestingly, the curriculum charts an environment where it is almost impossible for him to refuse.

• عن ابن عمر رضي الله عنه أنه سمع رسول الله ﷺ يقول: «إذا استأذنتكم نساؤكم إلى المساجد فأذنوا لهن»<sup>(٤)</sup>، فإذا كان خروج المرأة للمسجد لأداء العبادة معتبراً فيه الإذن، فلأن يعتبر ذلك في الخروج للعمل من باب أولى.

### Conditions for Women's Work

- [It is reported] from Ibn Omar that he had heard the Messenger of Allah saying: "If your women have asked your permission [to attend] the mosque, give it to them." If a woman's departure to the mosque to perform worship is considered permissible, it is considered all the more so in going out to work.

***Fiqh 5, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (Literature and Qur'an ), 2019, pp. 78–79.***

Legitimacy for the status of women and their involvement in business is drawn from the Saudi pre-Islamic heritage. Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, an accomplished business woman in her own right, is known to every Muslim as the first wife of the Prophet and an important part of Islamic heritage. The focus in the curriculum however, is on her career as an independent woman, in the open environment of pre-Islamic Arabia. The Arabs of the time had "commendable moral values even without Islam."<sup>75</sup> The fairly high status of women in the past forms part of this resurgent pride. In the following example, much admiration is expressed regarding the pre-Islamic era, and is meant to strengthen nationalistic sentiment. Interestingly, almost as an afterthought, but perhaps instructive to keep students from being too wide-eyed about the past, the sins of pre-Islamic Arabs are also mentioned:

<sup>72</sup> *Social Studies and Civics*, Grade 9, Vol. 1, 2019, p. 28.

<sup>73</sup> *Fiqh 5, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (Literature and Qur'an)*, 2019, p. 26.

<sup>74</sup> *Fiqh 1, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track)*, 2019, p. 31.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.



### الحياة الاجتماعية:

اتَّسَم العرب بالقيم الأخلاقية الحميدة، مثل: الشجاعة والكرم والوفاء بالعهد وحماية الجار، وحظيت المرأة بمكانة عالية في المجتمع العربي فقد كانت خديجة بنت خُوَيْلِد سيدة في قومها تسير قوافلها التجارية من مكة إلى الشام واليمن. وانتشرت بين بعض القبائل قبل الإسلام عادات سيئة، مثل: لعب المَيْسِر (القمار) والأخذ بالثأر.

#### Social Life:

The Arabs were characterized by commendable moral values. For example: heroism, generosity, keeping promises and protecting one's neighbor. Women gained high status in Arab society. Khadijah bint Khuwaylid was a respected woman and was running her trade caravans from Mecca to the Levant and Yemen.

Before Islam, bad habits spread among some of the tribes, such as gambling and taking revenge.

***Social Studies and Civics, Grade 4, Vol. 2, 2019, p. 45.***

There is one particular area within the curriculum that appears to echo a new direction for the kingdom: Successful Saudi women entrepreneurs are expected to revitalize and boost the Saudi economy. Saudi women represent 39 percent of the total number of entrepreneurs in the kingdom.<sup>76</sup> In the current environment, women may start a business without the permission of a male guardian.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Up 35 percent over the past ten years according to official statistics released for World Entrepreneurship Day 2017. As of July 2018 there were 98,853 registered Saudi businesswomen mainly in the services sector but with small businesses ranging in such areas as fashion and interior design, jewelry, cosmetics, clothing and art. In other professional services women participated in the fields of education, event management, exhibition organizing, public relations, marketing, commerce, real estate, tourism, food service and manufacturing; Arab News, "Saudi Female Entrepreneurs Increase by 35% in 10 Years: Report," November 28, 2017, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1200291/saudi-arabia>;

While most of the curriculum appears in line with the progressive direction of Vision 2030, there remains material, particularly within Islamic legal instruction, that directly attacks women who are believed to be influenced by the West. Such "liberated women" serve as a tool in the hands of today's "enemies of humanity" from among infidels and hypocrites (*kuffar wamunafiqun*) who wish "that the woman will be a tool of destruction, a trap to hunt those weak in their faith or those having perverted impulses."<sup>78</sup> The textbook in question also quotes a saying ascribed to the Prophet, that "If I had commanded anyone to prostrate to someone, the woman would be required to prostrate to her husband." But the same text goes on to show that disobedience to one's husband is not a sin against Allah.<sup>79</sup>

### Gender Roles

The commitment of the curriculum to orthodox family structures and gender roles is unchanged. Elementary textbooks explain the opposition of Islam to men's imitation of women and *vice versa*.

من حكمة الله في خلقه أن جعل بين المرأة والرجل اختلافاً في المهام والمسؤوليات والمواد وميّز بينهما في الهيئة والخلقة، وجاء الإسلام بمنع تشبه أحد الجنسين بالآخر ولو كان ذلك في المظهر كما في هذا الحديث :

عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنه قال : « لعن رسول الله ﷺ المتشبهين من الرجال بالنساء، والمتشبهات من النساء بالرجال »<sup>(١)</sup>.

**اللعن هو:** الطرد والإبعاد من رحمة الله، وإذا لعن رسول الله ﷺ أحدا فهذا دليل على عظم ذنبه وشناعة فعله، وأنه من كبائر الذنوب.

Allah in His wisdom made a difference in the creation between woman and man in assignments, responsibilities and disposition. He made a distinction between them in body and shape. Islam forbids the imitation of one of the sexes to the other, even if it is in looks, as it pointed out in the following hadith:

[It is reported from] Ibn Abbas who said: 'The Messenger of Allah cursed those men imitating women, and women imitating men.'

Mona S. AlMunajjed, "Opinion: Saudi Women Entrepreneurs are Agents of Change," *Arabian Business*, February 14, 2019,

<https://www.arabianbusiness.com/startup/412833-opinion-saudi-women-entrepreneurs-are-agents-of-change>.

<sup>77</sup> See AlMunajjed, "Opinion: Saudi Women," 2019. The text suggests that permission from a guardian must be given; see also: *Fiqh 5*, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019, pp. 78–79.

<sup>78</sup> *Fiqh 5*, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019, p. 16.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

**And the curse is:** To banish and expel from the compassion of Allah, and if the Messenger of Allah cursed somebody, this is a proof of the enormity of his guilt and the atrociousness of his deed, and it is a major sin.

**Hadith and Sira, [Islamic Traditions and Prophetic Biography], Grade 4, Vol.2** 2019, p. 26.

Wearing clothing of the opposite sex and joking about it is prohibited.



فاللباسُ الخاصُّ بالمرأة لا يجوز للرجل أن يلبسه مثل :

واللباسُ الخاصُّ بالرجل لا يجوز للمرأة أن تلبسه مثل :



- وهذا التحريم يشمل حالة الجدِّ والهزل؛ فلا يجوز للرجل مثلاً لبس ملابس نسائية لإضحاك أصحابه أو بحجة التمثيل .
- وقد ذكر النبي ﷺ وعيداً شديداً لمن فعل ذلك وهو اللعن، فما اللعن؟

This prohibition includes both cases of seriousness and fun. A man, for example, should not wear women's clothing to make his friends laugh or for acting in a sketch or play.

**Hadith and Sira, Grade 4, Vol.2, 2019, p. 27.**

High school texts include specific prohibitions of sodomy in the chapter on transgressions against Allah (*hudud*).<sup>80</sup> The text does not specify the punishment against gay sex, but quotes medieval scholar Ibn Taymiyya that, "both the top one and the bottom one are killed."<sup>81</sup>

### جريمة اللواط

اللواط جريمة مستبشعة، ومعصية منكرة، ظهرت عند أمة سالفة، هي أمة لوط، فعاقبهم الله عقوبة لم يعاقب بها أحداً غيرهم؛ ليكونوا عبرة لمن بعدهم، ورادعاً لمن انتكست فطرته، وسولت له نفسه الوقوع في هذه الجريمة أن يصيبه ما أصابهم، فقال سبحانه:

### The Crime of Sodomy

Sodomy [*lawat*] is a repugnant crime, a reprehensible sin that appeared among a former nation, the nation of Lot. Allah gave them a punishment no one else had received before, so they would become a lesson for those who came after them, and a deterrent for anyone whose innate human nature [*fitra*] degenerated, and his soul had tempted him to fall into this crime; he will be struck in the same manner as happened to them [nation of Lot, i.e., Sodom].

<sup>80</sup> In the beginning of the chapter, the textbook clarifies that in sharia, *hudud* transgression is a "legally sanctioned sin for disobedience in which Allah's right prevails" (explained as typically not open for pardon); *Fiqh 1*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 246.

<sup>81</sup> *Fiqh 1*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 256.

And [We had sent] Lot when he said to his people, 'Do you commit such immorality such as no one in creation [ever] committed before you? Indeed, you approach men with desire, instead of women. Rather, you are a transgressing people.' [Al-A'raf 7: 80–81].<sup>82</sup> So when Our command came, We turned [the cities] upside down and rained down on them brimstones hard as baked clay, spread layer on layer. Marked from your Lord: And Allah 's punishment is not far from the wrongdoers [Hud 11: 82–83].<sup>83</sup>

## تعريف اللواط

هو وطء الذكر في الدبر.

### Definition of Sodomy

Male intercourse in the anus.

**Fig 1, Grades 10–12** (Joint Track), 2019, p. 255.

The textbook further explains that forbidden sexual relations, including gay relations and incest are some of the main causes of sexually transmitted diseases.<sup>84</sup>

While internal political changes under the aegis of Vision 2030 have aimed to modernize Saudi society, the kingdom is not likely to undergo a substantial liberalization program quickly. At its core, Saudi Arabia remains a tribal society with traditionally defined gender roles. Tensions between the modern state and tribal identities exist but remain strong, despite the changes.<sup>85</sup>

Within the textbooks, the conservative fabric of Saudi society remains intact, with an emphasis on the family as the center of a strong moral Saudi state. Morality, respect for authority, and a pious and traditional outlook all serve as important points of reference for the textbooks to dictate proscribed behavior. Lessons are interspersed with more traditional instruction on the virtues of the Saudi family and the woman's role in caring for children in the home; the man's proper place remains outside. Nevertheless, the curriculum appears to have begun the process of change; the door has been opened, however slightly, and will in all likelihood be put to a good use by entrepreneurial female students as they become young adults.

<sup>82</sup> Qur'an, Al-A'raf 7: 80–84,  
<https://quran.com/7/80-84>.

<sup>83</sup> Qur'an, Hud 11: 82–92,  
<https://quran.com/11/82-92>.

<sup>84</sup> *Family and Health Education 6*, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (for Girls), 2019, pp. 71, 82.

<sup>85</sup> Sebastian Maisel, "The New Rise of Tribalism," 2014; Sebastian Maisel, "Tribalism and Family Affairs in the Arabian Peninsula," *Hawwa: Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World*, 16: nos. 1–3, (2018): pp. 26–59.

## National Identity: History, Language, Geography and Arts

### Primary/Intermediate School

The national education curriculum showcases the Arabic language as representing both the nation's religious roots (the language of the Qur'an)<sup>86</sup> and the national language of Saudi Arabia. Textbook names such as "My Beautiful Language" and "My Eternal Language" attest to the weight of Arabic in Saudi education.

A third-grade Arabic language textbook reveals a number of salient themes: "Interacting with Others" includes a focus on respect for the "Pre-Islamic Other"; "Across my country," emphasizes national pride in the Saudi state by honoring the homeland; "The Little Muslim," encourages students to help others less fortunate, providing a basis for a giving and altruistic society by combining Arabic folklore with lessons and morals from Islamic teaching.

The first unit includes examples, showing the themes of mutual respect for both the individual and the Other.

In the first story, we see a little boy taking a trip with his family on an airplane. The story includes a conversation between Adel (the boy) and his father. After seeing children running inside the plane he tells his father that the plane is not a place for playing.

رَدَّ الْأَبُ: أَحْسَنْتَ يَا عَادِلُ، فَالطَّائِرَةُ وَسِيلَةٌ لِلسَّفَرِ، فَهِيَ تَحْمِلُ رُكَّابًا مِنْ  
أَجْناسٍ مُتَنَوِّعَةٍ وَأَدْيَانٍ مُخْتَلِفَةٍ، وَلَا بُدَّ أَنْ نُرِيَهُمْ صُورَةً مُشْرِفَةً لِلْمُسْلِمِ  
الَّذِي يَتَحَلَّى بِأَخْلَاقِ الْإِسْلَامِ وَيَتَمَسَّكُ بِأَدَابِهِ

The father replied: 'Well done Adel, the plane is for travelling and it carries passengers from different races and religions. We must show them an honorable picture of the Muslim who possess the ethics and values of Islam.'

***My Language, Grade 3*, Vol. 1, 2018, p.16.**

The text reinforces the view that a Muslim is expected to have good manners and moral values. There is a sense of the Other in the recognition of different races and religions.

The next unit in the third grade language book highlights the connection between nationalism and Islam.

<sup>86</sup> Arabic as the language of the Holy Qur'an is mentioned in the introduction of a new book: *My Eternal Language*, Grade 7, Vol. 2, 2019, p. 7.





Unit 2: From All over my Country

***My Language, Grade 3, Vol. 1, 2018, p.41.***

Another of the values taught is cooperation. "The Little Muslim" tells the story of young school children who cooperate to plant trees in the school yard.



***My Language, Grade 3, Vol. 1, 2018, p. 85.***

قَالَ الْمُعَلِّمُ: إِنَّ التَّعَاوُنَ ثَمَرَةٌ مِنْ ثَمَرَاتِ الْإِيمَانِ، يَزِيدُ التَّرَابُطَ فِي الْمُجْتَمَعِ  
وَيُشَاعِرُ الْمَحَبَّةَ وَالْمَوَدَّةَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ.

The teacher said: 'Cooperation is a fruit of faith; it enhances cohesion and solidarity of the community and spreads love and affection among the people.'

**My Language, Grade 3**, Vol. 1, 2018, p. 86.

Another text deals with the values of altruism. It tells the tale of a boy who reads about the famous story of three injured Muslim warriors who all refused to receive water before their companions. They all die as a symbol of sacrifice and altruism (*ithar*).

الْوَالِدُ: مَا أَجْمَلَ الْإِثَارَ يَا بُنَيَّ! فَالْمُسْلِمُ الْحَقُّ يُؤْثِرُ غَيْرَهُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ، فَيَجُوعُ  
لِيَشْبَعَ أَخُوهُ، وَيَظْمَأُ لِيَرْتَوِيَ أَخُوهُ.

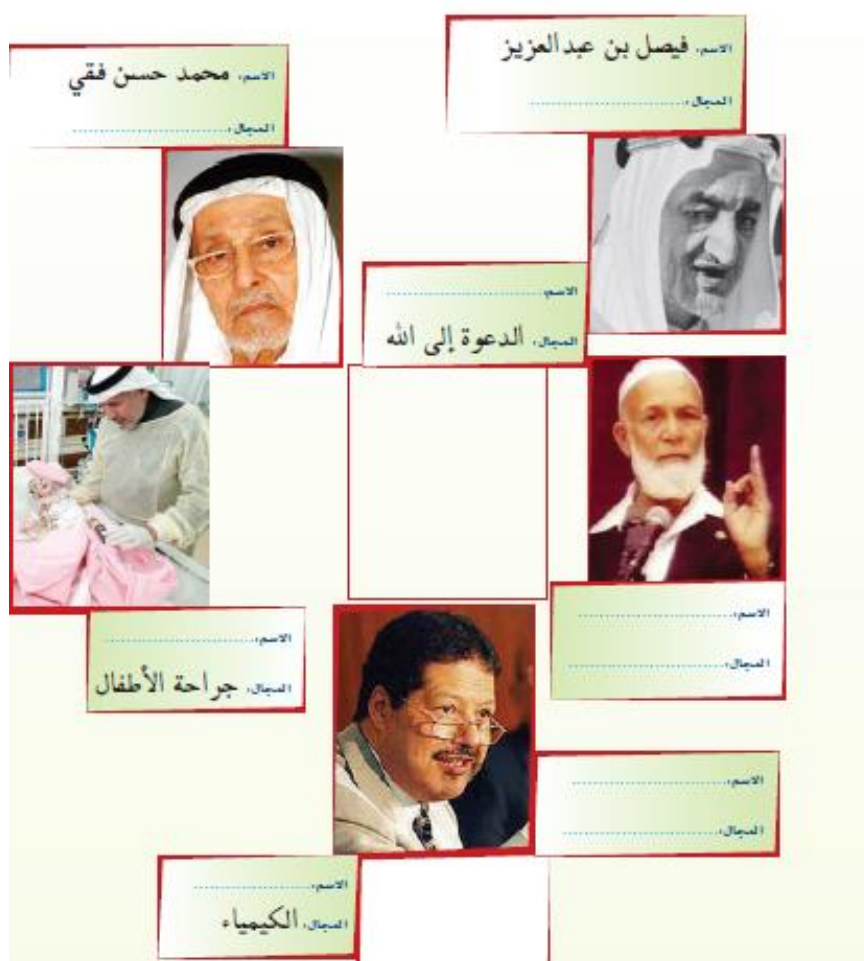
Altruism is beautiful my son! A true Muslim takes care of others before himself. He will rather stay hungry so his brother can eat and remain thirsty so his brother can drink.

**My Language, Grade 3**, Vol. 1, 2018, p. 104.

The Arabic textbook for seventh grade deals with Islamic values, role models and the homeland.<sup>87</sup> The section on role models depicts famous achievers such as doctors and writers alongside personalities from the royal family and religious leaders.



<sup>87</sup> *My Eternal Language*, Grade 7, Vol. 1, 2018, p. 82.



Male role models: king, poet, surgeon, cleric, scientist

*My Eternal Language, Grade 7, Vol. 1, 2018, pp. 82–83.*

An eighth-grade textbook discusses the transformation of Islamic rule from the period of the Rashidun, the four Caliphs following the Prophet, and the period of the Umayyad dynasty.<sup>88</sup> Prior to the Umayyads, Islamic polity followed the principle of allegiance (*bay'ah*) and consultation (*shura*). With the advent of the Umayyads, governance became hereditary, a change considered advantageous by the textbook. Indeed, a more stable regime promised less infighting within Muslim ranks (*fitna*). The message for today is clear: It is better to be ruled by a reasonable moderate family. The Ummayyads presented a positive image of stability as they built a large Muslim Empire in the period is known as "the age of Islamic conquests."<sup>89</sup>

<sup>88</sup> *Social and National Studies, Grade 8, Vol. 1, 2018, pp. 9, 11.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.



شكل (٦)

#### Islamic lands in the Umayyad era

*Social and National Studies, Grade 8, Vol. 1, 2018, p. 19.*

The lessons from the defeat of the Muslim states by the Crusaders and Mongols revolve around lack of unity. The text provides some lessons.

- ١- استغلال الأعداء فرص ضعف وتفكك المسلمين وعدم وحدتهم في تحقيق مصالحهم الدينية والسياسية والاقتصادية.
- ٢- أن العلاج في الوحدة والتربية على الإيمان، وتوثيق الصلة بالله.
- ٣- أن الدولة ذات الخيرات الوفيرة هي مطمع للآخرين، وعليها أن تُعد القوة الرادعة لحماية نفسها من تلك الأطماع.

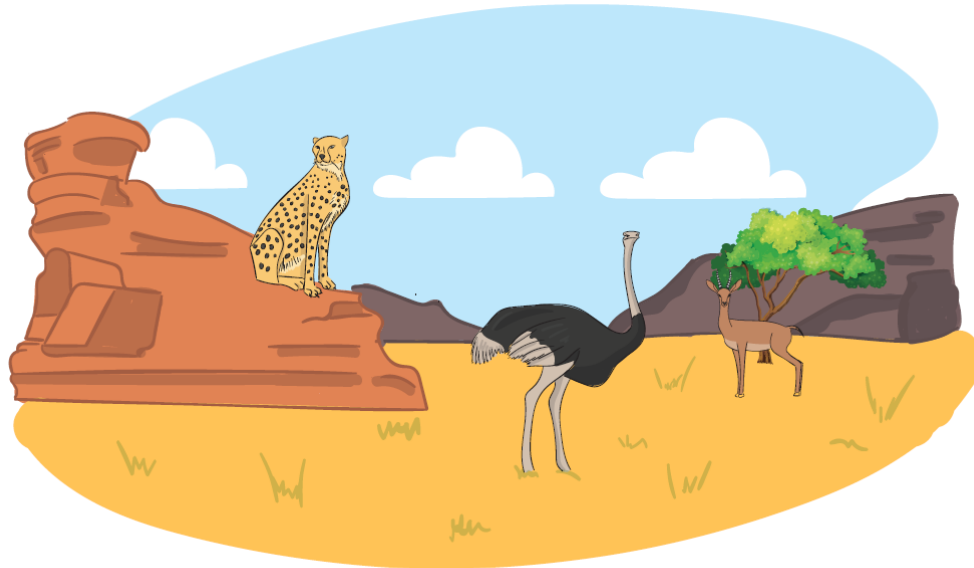
1. The enemies took advantage of the opportunities presented by the weakness and disintegration of the Muslims and their lack of unity in securing their religious, political and economic interests.
2. The solution lies in unity and a culture of faith, strengthening the connection to Allah.
3. A country with great treasures is coveted by others, and should prepare a deterring force to protect itself from the greedy.

*Social and National Studies, Grade 8, Vol. 1, 2018, p. 76.*

#### Nature and Nationalism

Nationalism is also expressed through the environment. Images in textbooks are often related to the homeland and by implication strengthen Saudi national identity (*su'uda*).

في وطني المملكة العربية السعودية كثير من المحميات الطبيعية، منها  
ست محميات ملكية للبيئة، هي:

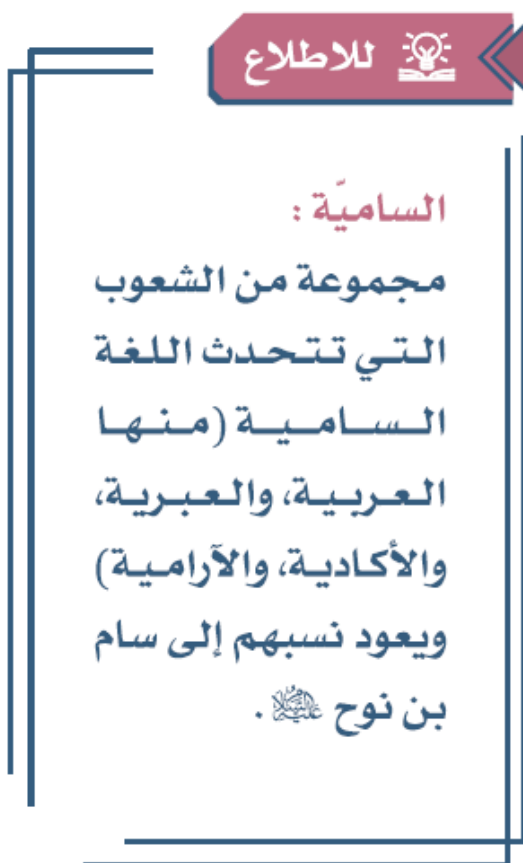


In my homeland, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, there are many nature reserves. Among them there are six royal nature reserves for the environment.

***Social Studies and Civics, Grade 4, Vol. 1, 2019, p. 56.***

Part of the wider nationalistic worldview advanced by the curriculum is the appreciation of pre-Islamic civilizations in the region at large. A seventh-grade social studies textbook includes one unit on "Civilizations" and one on "Dialogue."<sup>90</sup> Both symbolize openness toward the Other. Despite only one lesson on pre-Islamic civilizations compared to four lessons on Islam, the chapter covers many ancient civilizations: Mesopotamian (including Sumarians, Accadians, Emorites, Assyrians, and Chaldeans), Egyptian and Chinese. Hebrew is mentioned as an ancient Semitic language alongside Arabic.

<sup>90</sup> *Social Studies and Civics, Grade 7, Vol. 1, 2019, p. 18.*



### Semitism

Peoples speaking Semitic languages, which includes Arabic, Hebrew, Akkadian and Aramaic, and which originate with Shem, the son of Noah.

*Social Studies and Civics, Grade 7, Vol. 1, 2019, p. 18.*

### The Modern Central State versus Local Cultures and Identities

Somewhat indirectly, the curriculum supports the modern central state in place of local culture and tribal affiliations. Here is an example from the field of medicine and hygiene. The textbook gives praise to modern (Western) practices and disparages local doctors (herbalists). Ironically, while doing so the textbooks rely on popular Western home remedies. The image below encourages a girl to consume an apple while having the flu. A 2015 research study found that evidence "does not support that an apple a day keeps the doctor away."<sup>91</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Matthew A. Davis, Julie P. W. Bynum, and Brenda E. Sirovich, "Association Between Apple Consumption and Physician Visit," *JAMA Internal Medicine* 175, no. 5 (May 1, 2015): pp. 777–83, doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2014.5466, PMC 4420713, PMID 25822137.





Rest a lot; drink much liquid; eat healthy food

*Family Education, Grade 5, Vol. 1 (for Girls), 2019, p. 23.*

When catching the flu: "rest a lot, drink much liquid and eat healthy food." The picture above shows a girl eating an apple because it is considered a healthy food in the Western world. In the following paragraph, from the same fifth-grade book, a local herbalist is derided for causing more harm to a child because he doesn't practice modern (Western) medicine.

**نشاط (٣)**

**اقرئي القصة الآتية، ثم اكتشفي التصرف الخاطئ ودونيه:**

أصيب الطفل خالد ذات يوم برشح بسيط، فحملته أمه إلى الطيبة في المركز الصحي القريب من المنزل، وبعد أن فحصته الطيبة طمأنت أم خالد قائلة: لا تقلقي، سيشفي طفلك - بإذن الله - خلال أيام، إذا نال قسطاً من الراحة وتناول طعاماً صحياً، والكثير من السوائل، وبالتالي فهو لا يحتاج إلى تناول أي دواء، لكن الأم لم تقتنع بكلام الطيبة، وذهبت بطفلها خالد إلى مداو بالأعشاب يدعي معرفة الطب، فركب له دواء من مكونات مجهولة المصدر وطلب مقابله مبلغاً كبيراً من المال، انصرفت أم خالد بطفلها وناولته هذا الدواء فور وصولها إلى المنزل، لتتفاجأ بتدهور حالة خالد، حيث ارتفعت درجة حرارته، وأصيب بنزلة معوية حادة.

اكتشفي التصرف الخاطئ الذي قامت به أم خالد، ثم قدمي لها النصيحة المناسبة:

.....

.....

### Activity 3

**Read the following story, then discover and write down the wrong behavior:**

One day, Khaled, the little boy had a simple runny nose. His mother took him to the lady medical doctor in the health center, close to their home. After her examination, the physician calmed down Umm [mother] Khaled saying: "Your child will be healed—Allah willing—in a few days, if he gets some rest, eats healthy food and drinks much

liquid. Therefore he does not need any medication." But the mother was not convinced by the words of the doctor. She took her son Khaled to an herbalist who claimed to have medical knowledge. He concocted a medication made of unidentified ingredients and asked in return for a large sum of money. Umm Khaled left the place and gave her child this medicine as soon as they arrived home. She was surprised to discover that Khaled's medical status had soon deteriorated, his temperature rose, and he contracted an acute intestinal inflammation.

Discover Umm Khaled's wrong behavior, and give her proper advice:

**Family Education, Grade 5, Vol. 1 (for Girls), 2019, p. 24.**

Convicted sorcerers can be executed for concocting "mixtures and medicines."

السحر نوعان:  
**النوع الأول:** منه ما هو كفر إذا كانت وسيلته الشياطين، ولهذا يقتل هذا الساحر ردة، وقتله موكل إلى ولي الأمر أو من ينوبه.  
**النوع الثاني:** ما هو كفر غير مخرج من الملة وهو سحر الشعوذة والدجل وقد يكون بنوع من الأخلاط والأدوية وهذا يعزر ولو بالقتل كفاً لشبهه وأذاه عن المسلمين وتعزيره وقتله موكل إلى ولي الأمر أو من ينوبه،

**There are two types of sorcery:**

**The first:** being infidelity if devils were the cause; therefore the sorcerer will be killed for apostasy. His execution is entrusted to the ruler or whomever he assigns.

**The second:** being infidelity that does not exclude one from the nation and it is the sorcery of charlatanism and swindling, which may include concoctions of mixtures and medicines. The punishment can be up to the level of killing because of its evil and harm on Muslims. His execution is entrusted to the ruler or whomever he assigns.

**Tawhid 1, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 151.**

In a 2017 Arab language textbook (now removed from the 2019 curriculum), nationalism, women's empowerment and Western science combine in the story of Polish-born, naturalized French citizen and female scientist, Marie Curie. The textbook praises Curie's scientific skills and also other Western scientists and inventors, such as Johannes Gutenberg and Isaac Newton. Curie's story, combines modernity, (Polish) nationalism and family values (including collaboration with husband Pierre).



*My Beautiful Language, Grade 5, Vol. 2 (for Girls), 2017, p. 181.*

In the following statement, the textbook highlights what is perceived to be the classic Western lifestyle conflict existing between career and family:

لَمْ يَشْغُلْهَا الْبَحْثُ عَنْ وَاجِبِهَا كَزَوْجَةٍ إِذْ عَرَفَتْ (مَارِي) كَيْفَ تُقَسِّمُ أَوْقَاتَهَا بِحُكْمَةٍ بَيْنَ وَاجِبَاتِهَا الْعَائِلِيَّةِ وَالتَّزَامَاتِ الْعِلْمِيَّةِ، فَكَانَتْ نِعَمَ الزَّوْجَةِ فِي الْبَيْتِ وَأَنْشَطَ الْبَاحِثِينَ فِي الْمُخْتَبِرِ،

Her research did not distract her from her duty as a wife because Marie knew how to divide her time wisely between her family duties and her scientific commitments. So, she was an excellent wife in her house and the most active researcher in the laboratory.

*My Beautiful Language, Grade 5, Vol. 2 (for Girls), 2017, p. 182.*

This episode serves as vehicle for stressing love and belonging to one's homeland. Poland—famous for being nationalist and Catholic—constitutes a role model for nationalist Saudi girls.

وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ هُوَ (البُولُونِيَوْم)  
كَمَا أَسْمَتْهُ (مَارِي) نِسْبَةً إِلَى بِلَادِهَا الْأَصْلِيَّةِ (بُولُونِيَا) الَّتِي ظَلَّتْ مُحِبَّةً وَمُخْلِصَةً لَهَا عَلَى الدَّوَامِ،

That was the Polonium that Marie named after her original homeland (Poland), which she still loved and was loyal to at all times.

***My Beautiful Language, Grade 5, Vol. 2 (for Girls), 2017, p. 183.***

## High School

The pre-Islamic era is taught through historical issues related to Arab culture in the Arabian Peninsula. The level 1 history book tells the story of Lot hosting angels in his tent while trying to protect them from the mob's anger. This is reflected in the concept of "*murū'a*" [manhood] which characterized the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula. Lot's behavior is significant because it shows a conscious effort to care for the outsider.



Teaching 'manliness' through the pre-Islamic story of Lot and the angels.

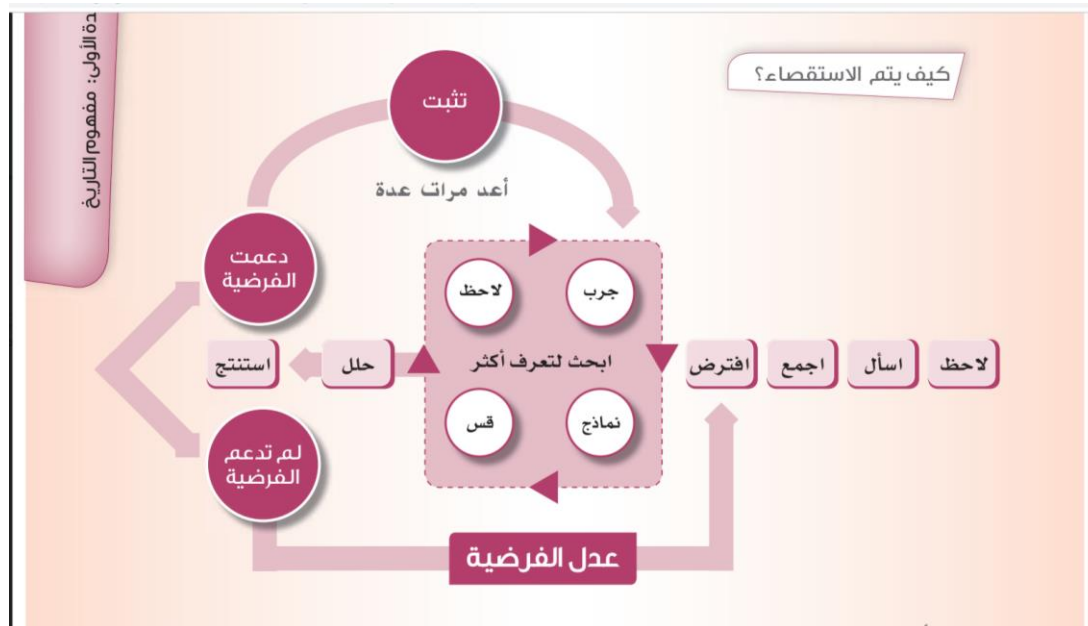
***Social and National Studies 1, Grades 10–12, Level 1, 2017, p. 30.***

National studies, from beginning to advanced levels, focuses purely on national issues. Students are taught about development, prosperity and human rights. In level 2, the inherent differences between human rights in Islam and the West are studied. Students are taught that Islam ensures a person's right to live, have security, be healthy physically and mentally and have property and family.<sup>92</sup>

History for the curriculum, begins with the ancient events described in the Qur'an—the creation of the world, ancient peoples, the ancient prophets and the rise of Islam. There is no mention of the "Big Bang," or any scientific ideas on the creation of the world, which creates a dilemma for

<sup>92</sup> *Social and National Studies 2, Grades 10–12, Level 2, 2017, pp. 110–23.*

students who need to apply scientific method in writing history. The following is a flow chart of scientific methods of writing history, and how to apply tools of evaluation and criticism.



*History and National Education 1, Grades 10–12, Level 3 (Administration, Literature and Qur'an), 2017, p. 13.*

High school history is mostly taught using the Islamic calendar. The Umayyad era is presented more favorably than the Abbasid era; possibly, it serves Saudi interests to show Arab dominance over the non-Arab components of the Islamic world, especially the Persian and Turkish elements.

Some issues with the curriculum's presentation of history:<sup>93</sup>

- A. The books describe the Abbasid era as a time when Islam made significant developments in science. The textbooks blame its collapse on the increased strength of non-Arab elements in the caliphate.
- B. The textbooks claim that Muslim military superiority caused the defeat of the Crusaders and hastened the collapse of the feudal system in Europe. However, the text ignores social and political developments in Europe which contributed to the defeat.
- C. The curriculum does not teach students about rebellions against the House of Saud but devotes ample space to the 1979 takeover of the Great Mosque by Islamic extremists and their defeat by Saudi forces.

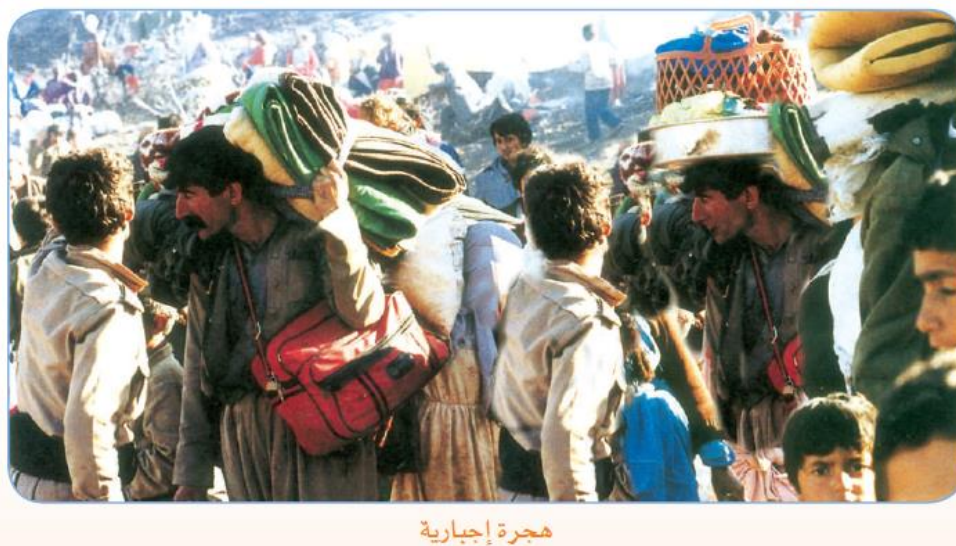
<sup>93</sup> *History, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2017, pp. 134–86.*



## Geography

Geography is taught only in the advanced levels of Saudi high schools. The standard of the textbooks is high.

Geography enables the curriculum to convey various messages. The following image accompanies a discussion on the horrors of forced immigration from wars, and places the number of displaced refugees has at almost sixty-six million worldwide. This meshes with the curriculum's instruction on the importance of security and stability.



هجرة إجبارية  
'Forced Migration'

***Geography and National Education 2, Grades 10–12, Level 5*** (Literature, Administration and Qur'an), 2019, p, 43.

The *Geography and National Education* textbook covers historical refugee problems, such as WWII and India's Independence. As for the Palestinian refugees, two important sentences were *erased* from the 2019 edition of the textbook. The 2017 edition reports that the "Israeli occupation of Palestine is responsible for the emigration of two million Palestinians," and that "the Israeli attack on Lebanon in June 1982 led to the emigration of nearly one million Lebanese and Palestinian people, most of whose cities and villages were completely destroyed."<sup>94</sup>

Thus, the 2019 edition appears to downplay the centrality of the Palestinian refugee problem first by pointing to the large numbers of current war refugees, and second by erasing the information on Palestinian refugees featured in the 2017 edition.

Also associated with the refugee issue is the "deportation" of European Jews. A discussion about minorities alludes to the Holocaust.

<sup>94</sup> *Geography and National Education 2, Grades 10–12, Level 5* (Literature, Administration and Qur'an), 2017 and 2019, p. 25.



وكلما اختلفت لغة الأقلية ودينها وثقافتها ساعد ذلك على تمسكها بجذورها، وإذا كانت الأقلية ذات قوة اقتصادية وعددية استغلت ذلك في الضغط على الدولة لتحقيق مطالبها وخاصة في فترات الطوارئ، وتتعرض بعض الأقليات للطرد والإبادة من الدول مثل طرد اليهود من أوروبا والهنود من أوغندا.

The more the minority's language and its religion remain different [from the majority's language and religion], the more it keeps its roots. If the minority commands an economic and demographic power, it may use it to pressure the state in order to achieve its demands, particularly during emergencies. Some minorities are exposed to deportation and extermination from [their respective] countries such as the deportation of the Jews from Europe and the Indians from Uganda.

**Geography and National Education 2, Grades 10–12 , Level 5 (Literature, Administration and Qur'an), 2019, p, 120.**

### Art Education

An art book for high school focuses on Western painting techniques and images. Wahhabi Islamic values focus on more abstract and graphic elements and classic Islamic art. However, human and animal figures are also featured in the textbook. Interestingly, the pre-historic art in textbooks is European, rather than Saudi. One of the included paintings, Pablo Picasso's "The Tragedy" (1903), is depicted below:



الشكل (٥٣) لوحة المأساة لبكاسو

Picasso تعبر عن الحزن واليأس

'The Tragedy' by Pablo Picasso expresses sadness and despair

**Art Education, Grades 10–12 (Optional Track), 2019, p. 49.**

The textbook points to Western influence on the Saudi Plastic Art movement. Nevertheless, the text explains that "Saudi artists managed to add their own style by including popular and Islamic motifs to their canvases." Students are required to examine and identify the art schools of Saudi artists (Clockwise from the upper right: Hisham Benjabi, Mahdi Al-Jeraibi, Safeya Binzagr and Abdullah Al-Shaikh). Note that images by female artist Safeya Binzagr and male artist Hisham Benjabi include images of people, but the textbook's editors chose paintings where such images are not conspicuous.



**Art Education, Grades 10–12 (Optional Track), 2019, p. 95.**

Sensitivity to Western art begins in elementary school. A painting by Vincent Van Gogh ("Bedroom in Arles", 1888) is featured in an Arabic fifth grade textbook, within an exercise on proper description. Absent are the name of the painting, the artist or Amsterdam's Van Gogh's Museum.



**My Beautiful Language, Grade 5, Vol. 2, (for Girls), 2017, p. 71**

## The Middle East and Beyond: Moderation or Radicalism

Beginning with the first grade, the curriculum presents a pro-peace, pro-moderation worldview.

The image conveys a peaceful and optimistic message: a nice private home on Peace Street in a community named "Prosperity." From the beginning of their education, the message of peace and prosperity is intended to follow students as they progress through the curriculum and manifest as they emerge as adults into Saudi society.



**Peace Street; Prosperity Quarter**

*Family Education, Grade 1, Vol. 1 (for Girls), 2019, p. 64.*

The curriculum clearly asserts Saudi Arabia's independence on the world stage;<sup>95</sup> that the kingdom has no hegemonic aims;<sup>96</sup> and the Saudis do not espouse Islamic or Arab unity which might be translated as controlling other independent countries. Yet the kingdom is not shy or timid to represent itself as "the main axis of the Arabs."<sup>97</sup>

### Saudi Vision 2030

In many new Saudi textbooks, students find, just before the images of the national flag, the current king and crown prince and a chart of Saudi Vision 2030 which imparts the worldview for Saudi citizens, beginning with the current generation of school children.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>95</sup> The textbooks discuss at length the struggle for independence against the Ottoman Empire; Saudi Arabia's decision not to get involved in WWI; its decision to work with the Americans in the late 1940s; and sending a military expedition during Israel's war of independence to help the Arab side and offer peace plans.

<sup>96</sup> There is no call for war to spread Islam or free the oppressed. There is no hegemonic nomenclature such as resistance (*muqawama*). *Jihad*, discussed at length in this report, involves commitment to serve the Saudi government militarily for defense purposes.

<sup>97</sup> *Social Studies and Civics, Grade 6, Vol. 2, 2019, p. 59.*

<sup>98</sup> Found in social studies and civics, geography and history textbooks but not Islamic studies and Arabic language textbooks; some textbooks display the Vision 2030 logo, but not the chart with its key strategic points.

A map displays the three "old world" continents: Africa, Asia and Europe, suggesting a view aimed at transportation and economic growth, predicated on the country's location and wealth. The view is one of cooperation in trade and investment, not industrial or military prowess. Unlike Iran, there is no inclination toward hegemony, neither of leadership or military might; there is no interest to engage in obsessive challenging of imagined enemies. Rather, an invitation to investment based on excellent location and sound credit.

Spreading Islam is not the focus of Vision 2030. As the foundation of the new curriculum, it is important to remember that the message of Vision 2030 is not meant only for foreign consumption but simultaneously as a new beginning and legacy for Saudi children.

The essential identity embraced by Vision 2030 and taught to all students is nationalist and mandates that Saudi society should strive to be animated and morally sound, with a thriving economy. While enthusiastically open to the world, the curriculum explains to students that Saudi Arabia, apart from being a democracy, has an "effective government" and "responsible citizenry." The Muslim and Arab Saudi heritage is implicit in the geographic centrality of the vision represented by the "animated homeland." The "Arab Homeland" or "Muslim Ummah" is not specifically taught as part of this emerging worldview.



**Islamic and Arab [Strategic] Depth**

Our country is the Muslims' *Qibla* [direction of prayer]

**Globally Important Geographic Location**

Connects the three continents and facilitates trade movement

**Economic Investment Capacity**

We enhance global investment by owning the largest sovereign [wealth] fund in the world<sup>99</sup>

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**Animated Society**

Deep-rooted values

Thriving environment

Solid structure

**Thriving Economy**

Lucrative opportunities

Attractive [environment for] competition

Effective investment

**Ambitious Homeland**

Effective government

Responsible citizen

**History, Grades 10–12** (Humanities), 2019, p. 7.

The Saudi Vision 2030 initiative is often discussed in textbooks which promote the kingdom's commitment to moderation (*i'tidal*) and efforts to contain radicalism and terrorism.<sup>100</sup>

## Christians and the West

The attitude toward Christians and the West is multifaceted. There are theological differences, and historical conflicts (the Crusades). Students learn to appreciate the need for cooperation with the West but concern over global culture is strong. Muslim minorities in the West should engage and integrate while preserving their unique culture. Students learn to accept foreigners at home. In short, the curriculum lays the ground for strong future Saudi-Western relations.

Some of the theological arguments against Christianity have been softened or removed. The statement that "Christianity in its current state is an invalid and perverted religion"<sup>101</sup> was removed from the 2019 edition. Also removed: the definition of Christianity as a colonial religious movement that subjected Muslims to Western ideas and stop the spread of Islam; the

<sup>99</sup> The Public Investment Fund (PIF—est. 1971).

<sup>100</sup> *Social Studies and Civics*, Grade 6, Vol. 2, 2019, p. 58. The textbooks praise the establishment of the Global Center for Combatting Extremist Ideology ([www.etidal.org](http://www.etidal.org)).

<sup>101</sup> *Hadith 2*, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2018, p. 268.



exploitation of education, medicine and social services by Christians;<sup>102</sup> and the definition of Christian as "pure infidel" [*kafir asli*].<sup>103</sup> The text still claims that the American University campuses in Beirut, Cairo and Istanbul are missionary schools.<sup>104</sup>

The expression "Christians and Jews"<sup>105</sup> was replaced by "the enemies of Islam."

٢- أن أعداء دين الإسلام لا يرضيهم إلا الكفر بالإسلام واتباع ملّتهم، ومهما قدّم لهم المسلم فإنه لن يحصل على رضاهم.

The enemies of Islam [Christians and Jews in the 2018 edition] are not satisfied unless they reject the belief in Islam [*al-kufr bil-islam*] and follow their community. Whatever the Muslim offers to them, he will never achieve his satisfaction.

**Tafsir 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019, p.74.**

New editions downplay animosity toward the West during the Crusades.<sup>106</sup> King Abdulaziz (1932–53) was pro-Western.

كانت سياسته الخارجية وعلاقاته الدولية أنموذجاً في الحكمة والنجاح، فقد تمكن من إنقاذ بلاده من المساس بسيادتها، وتعامل مع الدول العظمى مثل بريطانيا وألمانيا وفرنسا والولايات المتحدة الأمريكية بمبادئ واضحة وأسلوب دبلوماسي صحيح استند فيه إلى ما يحقق المصلحة للبلاد ونجح في ذلك، وقاد بلاده بكل حكمة وذكاء واستقلال فريد من نوعه في عالم السياسة الدولية، وتجنب الأزمات الدولية، بل استفاد منها لمصلحة بلاده، وأصبحت المملكة ركناً لمواقف الدعم والشرف لقضايا العرب والمسلمين والاستقرار للسلام العالمي.

The foreign policy and international relations [of King Abdulaziz] was a model of wisdom and success. He managed to save his country from infringements upon its sovereignty. He cooperated with superpowers such as the Britain, Germany, France and the United States of America applying clear and correct diplomatic methods to secure the country's interests. He succeeded in achieving that. [King Abdulaziz] led his country with astuteness, wisdom and independence that are rare to find in the world of international politics. He avoided international crises; moreover, he exploited them for the benefit of his country. The kingdom has thus become a mainstay for help and honor for the Arabs and Muslims, for stability and world peace.

**History, Grades 10–12 (Humanities) 2019, p. 162.**

<sup>102</sup> *Hadith 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2018, pp. 268–71.*

<sup>103</sup> *Tawhid 3, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Ethics and Religious Schools), 2018, p. 55.*

<sup>104</sup> *Hadith 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2018, p. 269.*

<sup>105</sup> *Tafsir 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2018, p.78.*

<sup>106</sup> *Social Studies and Civics, Grade 8, Vol. 1, 2019, p. 57.*



There is much to learn from the West. American psychologist Abraham Maslow and his hierarchy of human needs are an example.

**إشراء**



**إبراهيم ماسلو**  
Abraham Maslow

عالم نفس أمريكي ( ١٩٠٨ / ١٩٧٠ م )  
اشتهر بنظريته « الدافعية الإنسانية » التي  
ركز فيها بشكل أساسي على جوانب  
الدافعية للشخصية الإنسانية، والمعروفة  
باسم « هرم ماسلو للحاجات الإنسانية »  
والتي فسّر فيها سلوك الإنسان من خلال  
الربط بين « الدوافع » و « الحاجات » حيث  
افترض أن الدوافع والحاجات هي التي تحرك  
سلوك الإنسان بشكل هرمي تصاعدي  
حسب الأولوية وشدة الاحتياج، ابتداء  
من « الحاجات الفسيولوجية » وكلما أشبع  
الإنسان حاجته في أحد مستويات الهرم،  
انتقل للمستوى التالي لإشباعه، وهكذا  
وصولاً إلى قمة هرم الحاجات .

American psychologist Abraham Maslow and his motivational theory



"Maslow's Pyramid of Human Needs"

*History and National Education 2, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (Administration, Literature and Qur'an), 2019, pp. 125–26.*

Islam provides a legal basis for cooperation with non-Muslims.

٦ الوفاء بالعهد: يجب الوفاء بالعهد مع الكفار ما دامت مدة الصلح مستمرة، ولم تقع منهم خيانة، والأدلة في ذلك كثيرة.

6. Fulfilling Agreements: It is compulsory to fulfill agreements made with the infidels [kuffar] as long as the reconciliation agreement continues, and there was no betrayal on their part. The evidence for this is plentiful.

**Hadith and Islamic Culture 5, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Science and Administration), 2019, p. 128.**

Western culture remains a threat; past defeats are associated with lack of faith.<sup>107</sup> Students are warned not to participate in non-Muslim holidays.<sup>108</sup> Religious deviations occurred because of foreign cultures.<sup>109</sup>

A new 2019 text attacks orientalist experts.<sup>110</sup> Another textbook slightly less critical about global culture.

**الشباب والواقع المعاصر**  
يتعرض الشباب المسلم اليوم لهجمة شرسة بأشكال وأساليب متنوعة، تروج الأفكار المنحرفة، والتحزبات، والأفلام المأجنية، والمخدرات، وغير ذلك من ألوان الفساد. ومن مقاصد هذه الحملات الشرسة إضعاف الإسلام وتحطيم مناعته، وقتل شهامته، وتبديد ثرواته، وإفساد عقول شبابه، وتشكيكهم في دينهم، والخيولة بينهم وبين المثل العليا، وقطع صلتهم بتاريخ الإسلام وحضارته وتربيتهم على الميوعة واتباع الأهواء والشهوات، وعدم الاكتراث بالفضائل ومعالي الأمور. فعلى الشباب أن يكون متمسكا بدينه معتزا بهويته ومواطنته، واعيا لمخططات أعدائه.

### The Youth and Modern Reality

Today, Muslim youth undergo a fierce attack in a variety of forms and styles, which promote perverted ideas, partisanships, dissolute movies, drugs and other forms of corruption. One intention of these fierce campaigns is to weaken Islam and destroy its immunity, kill its magnanimity, waste its wealth, corrupt the minds of its youth, cast in their hearts doubts on their religion and prevent them from attaining their lofty ideals. They strive to cut off their link with the history of Islam and its civilization; to educate them on changeability and following their whims and desires; and not to care about the virtues and high meaning of things. Young people should be attached to their religion, proud of their identity and citizenship and aware of the plans of their enemies.

**Hadith 1, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 214.**

<sup>107</sup> *Social and National Studies*, Grade 8, Vol. 1, 2018, p. 76.

<sup>108</sup> *Tawhid 1*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 165.

<sup>109</sup> *Tawhid 1*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 37.

<sup>110</sup> *Tawhid 1*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 13.

Students learn that their co-religionists in the West should engage and integrate while preserving their unique culture (no 2019 edition).

### حلول مقترحة لمشكلات الأقليات الإسلامية :

- ١- التمسك بكتاب الله وسنة رسوله ﷺ، ونبذ الفرقة وترك التعصب لمذهب أو طائفة أو جنس، والوحدة بين أفراد الأقلية الإسلامية ودعم مؤسساتها وجمعياتها والالتزام بأداب الخلاف .
- ٢- الانخراط السلمي النشط في مؤسسات الدولة السياسية والاقتصادية والاجتماعية بحيث يثبتون للأكثرية أنهم عامل إيجابي في بناء الدولة ومؤسساتها وليسوا عامل هدم لها .
- ٣- الدعوة إلى تحقيق مآربهم بالحسنى وعبر فهم عميق للوسائل السلمية، ومد يد الصداقة والتعاون للأكثرية وعدم الانعزال والانغلاق في مجتمعاتهم الصغيرة .
- ٤- الاتصال بالمسلمين ومنظماتهم عبر مؤسسات الدولة التي يوجدون بها، وأن تكون وسائل دعمهم مالياً ومعنوياً معروفة ومفتوحة لبث الطمأنينة في نفوس الأكثرية والتيقن بأنهم جماعة فاعلة ببناء من جماعات المجتمع فتعطى حقوقها السياسية ويعترف بها من قبل الدولة .
- ٥ - الالتزام بالقيم الإسلامية لعكس صورة مشرفة وإيجابية تجاه الإسلام ،المسلمين .

### Suggested Solutions to the Problems of Muslim Minorities:

In order to eliminate these problems, Muslims should:

1. Adhere to the Book of Allah, reject division and shun fanaticism to a doctrine [madhhab], community or race. [Keep the] unity among members of the Islamic minority and support its institutions and associations with commitment to disagreement etiquette.
2. Engage in an active and peaceful manner in the state's political, economic and social institutions to show the majority that they constitute a positive element in building the state and its institutions, and not a destructive element.
3. Demand what they aspire to achieve in an outgoing manner through deep understanding of peaceful ways, offering a friendly hand while collaborating with the majority. They should refrain from isolation and seclusion in their little communities.
4. Communicate with Muslims and their organizations through the institutions of the state in which they dwell. Their means of financial and moral support should be known and open in order to keep the majority reassured. They should be aware that they constitute an active and constructive segment among other segments of society so they secure their political rights and be recognized by the state.
5. Commit to Islamic values to reflect an honorable and positive image of Muslims and Islam.

*Social and National Studies 2, Grades 10–12, Level 2, 2017, p. 80.*

Tolerance toward Christians and Jews at home is encouraged.

ولم يعرف في تاريخ المسلمين الطويل أنهم ضيقوا على اليهود والنصارى أو غيرهم أو أنهم أجبروا أحدا من أي طائفة من الطوائف اليهودية أو النصرانية على اعتناق الإسلام. يقول توماس آرنولد : ( لم نسمع عن أية محاولة مدبرة لإرغام غير المسلمين على قبول الإسلام أو عن أي اضطهاد منظم قصد منه استئصال الدين المسيحي)

No case is known during the long history of Muslims that they suppressed Christians, Jews or others, or they forced anyone from the Christian or the Jewish community to adopt Islam. [British orientalist] Thomas Arnold said: 'We did not hear about any planned attempt to force non-Muslims to accept Islam or about any organized persecution aimed at eradicating the Christian faith.'

*Arabic Language 4, Language Competencies, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 158.*

إن غير المسلمين في المملكة العربية السعودية يدخلون ضمن أفراد المجتمع الإسلامي الذي أذن لهم بالبقاء بعهد الأمان الذي قرره الشريعة الإسلامية، وقررت في ضوئه حقوق غير المسلمين وواجباتهم، ولذا فحقوق غير المسلمين مكفولة لهم ينعمون بها، تطبيقاً لشريعة الإسلام السمحة التي لا تضيق بالمخالف وتضمن له حقوقه.

Non-Muslims in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia form part of the people of the Islamic society and are allowed to stay according to the safety agreement determined by Islamic Sharia as regards the rights of non-Muslims and their obligations. Therefore, the rights of non-Muslims are guaranteed so they can benefit from them, in line with tolerant Islamic Sharia, which does not bother the dissenters and secures their full rights.

*Arabic Language 4, Language Competencies, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 159.*

Preference in hiring new employees is given first to Muslims, which creates solidarity. Though hiring "infidels" is legal, it "supports and empowers them." Examples of hiring non-Muslims (including a Jew) in early Islam are given.<sup>111</sup> Other reasons to hire Muslims first include ideological disparity and the practical difficulties non-Muslims have integrating a non-Islamic lifestyle in an almost exclusively Islamic region.

Judaism and Christianity were practiced in the Arabian Peninsula before Islam.

### الحياة الدينية:

كان في الجزيرة العربية قبل الإسلام عبادات وديانات مختلفة، منها:

- ١- الحنيفية: وهي ملة إبراهيم ﷺ (توحيد الله عز وجل).
- ٢- عبادة الأوثان والأصنام.
- ٣- عبادة النجوم والكواكب.
- ٤- اليهودية والنصرانية: اعتنقت اليهودية والنصرانية في بعض مناطق الجزيرة العربية قبل الإسلام.

<sup>111</sup> *Hadith and Islamic Culture 3, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2017 and 2019, p. 266.*

### Religious Life:

Before Islam there were a number of worship systems and religions In the Arabian Peninsula:

1. **Hanifism**: The Religion of Abraham.
2. **Idol** and sculpture worshipping.
3. **Stars** and planets worshipping.
4. **Judaism and Christianity**: These religions were practiced in a number of areas of the Arabian Peninsula before the Islamic religion was founded.

*Social Studies and Civics, Grade 4, Vol. 2, 2019, p. 44.*

## Islamic Nation and Arab World

The Muslim and Arab Saudi heritage is implicit in the geographic focus of Vision 2030; but the essential identity taught to all students is nationalist, represented by the rejuvenation of a heretofore inanimate homeland. The "Arab Homeland" or "Muslim Ummah" is not an integral part of this worldview. The following reference explains the attitude of Saudi Arabia toward the region, which includes strict non-intervention in the internal affairs of others.

### Characteristics of [Saudi] Foreign Policy

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia outlined a clear approach to its foreign policy including:

1. No interference in the internal affairs of other countries, and not allowing any country to interfere in the affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This has been translated into treaties of friendship and good-neighborly relations with neighboring countries.
2. Advocacy for Arab and Muslim causes and supporting them in international circles and positive interaction with contemporary global problems, leading to the support of international organizations to achieve peace and justice among peoples.

*History and National Education 2, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (Administration, Literature and Qur'an), 2019, p. 96.*

### More Moderation in the Study of History

To a large extent, Saudi students learn about their homeland's global and regional positioning through the study of history. This is true as it relates to their understanding of the Saudi role in the region, but also of its larger affiliations in the Arab world and the Islamic community (ummah). The Saudis are a key player in these transnational bodies. The historical conflicts of Muslims and Arabs against powerful past enemies—notably the Mongols and Crusaders—help students connect to the Saudi self-perception as a regional and global actor—possibly helped by a more moderate depiction of these medieval conflicts.

A comparison of the Crusaders and the Mongol Invasions in the 2018 and 2019 editions of an eighth grade social studies textbook shows slight moderation toward the then-enemies of Islam. The section titles in the 2019 edition focus on issues affecting the Abbasid state but exclude

mention of invading enemies. The European and Mongol invaders *are* dealt with in the text, however. The desire for material gain and establishment of European principalities in the region are taught as the motivations for the attacks in both editions, the authors of the 2019 edition **removed** "hate of Islam" as one of the reasons for the Crusades.<sup>112</sup> The same list of reasons in the 2018 edition includes the item: "fanaticism against Islam and its people."<sup>113</sup>

### Saudi Arabia as a Distinguished Arab Country

The curriculum emphasizes Saudi Arabia's role in helping Arab countries.

#### المحافظة على النظام العربي:

اتخذ الملك سلمان بن عبدالعزيز العديد من القرارات لدعم عدد من الدول العربية ومساندة قضاياها؛ للمحافظة على النظام الإقليمي العربي، وتطوير الجامعة العربية بوصف المملكة العربية السعودية هي المحور الأساس للعرب.



#### Maintaining the Arab System:

Salman bin Abdulaziz supported a number of causes in Arab countries to preserve the regional Arab system and develop the Arab League [since] Saudi Arabia is the main axis of the Arabs.

*Social Studies and Civics, Grade 6, Vol. 2, 2019, p. 59.*

### Rejection of Islamism and Islamist Terrorism

At times, the Saudi curriculum takes a direct stance against Islamism and terrorism, at home and abroad. Security—as the opposite of fanaticism and terrorism—is important for all. A reading exercise contains excerpts from a sermon by Shayk Abdul Rahman Al-Sadis, Imam of the Holy Mosque in Mecca. Note that the text begins with a universal, not particularly Muslim, perspective.

<sup>112</sup> *Social Studies and Civics, Grade 8, Vol. 1, 2019, p. 57.*

<sup>113</sup> *Social and National Studies, Grade 8, Vol. 1, 2018, p. 58.*



ب- من خطبة للشيخ صالح بن حميد، إمام الحرم المكي الشريف

أيها المسلمون، الأمن مطلبٌ عزيزٌ وكنزٌ ثمينٌ، هو قوام الحياة الإنسانية كلّها، وأساس الحضارة المدنية أجمعها، تتطلّع إليه المجتمعات، وتتسابق لتحقيقه السلطات، وتتنافس في تأمينه الحكومات، تُسخر له الإمكانيات المادية والوسائل العلمية والدراسات الاجتماعية والنفسية، وتُحشد له الأجهزة الأمنية والعسكرية، وتُستفّر له الطاقات البشرية.

ومن أجل هذا فإنّ كلّ عملٍ تخريبيٍّ يستهدف الأمنين ومعصومي الدماء والنّفوس فهو عملٌ إجراميٌّ محرّمٌ، مخالفٌ لأحكام شرع الله، فكيف إذا كان القتل والتخريب والإفساد والتدمير في بلدٍ يُعلي كلمة الله،

O Muslims, security is a dear demand and a precious treasure. It is the foundation of all human life, and the basis of the entire civil culture; societies aspire to secure it and authorities compete to achieve it . . . it mobilizes human energies.

Every destructive act that targets the blood of calm, sinless souls, is a criminal and forbidden act, contrary to the provisions of Allah's law. How can killing, destruction, and corruption in a country which raises the word of Allah . . . all this makes the forbidden more prohibited and the atheism more pronounced. Allah is sufficient for us, and Allah is the best trustee.

**Arabic Language 5, Grades 10–12 [Exercises], Level 5 (Science and Administration), 2019, pp. 35–36.**

The following reading exercise praises security teams and criticizes international terrorists—without pointing to their Muslim affiliation. Rather, the curriculum portrays the kingdom as a victim of Islamist terrorism on a similar level with other nations.

ولأن المملكة جزء من العالم، فقد عانت من جرائم الفكر المنحرف الذي تحول إلى إرهاب تعددت أساليبه ومسالكه ونال عددًا من دول العالم، لأنه آفة خطيرة لا ينتمي لدين، ولا يعترف بوطن، لكنه -بفضل الله- لم ولن يهزم الدول القوية بإيمانها وبتلاحم قيادتها وشعبها مثل المملكة العربية السعودية، وهذا ما جعل مجاديف المجرمين والإرهابيين تنكسر على يد سواعد رجال الأمن البواسل، الذين تهاوت أمام قوتهم ويقظتهم كل

Because the kingdom is part of the world, it suffered from the crimes of distorted thinking that [eventually] developed into terrorism. Having many methods and paths, it affected a number of countries in the world. [Islamist terrorism] is a serious calamity that does not belong to a religion, does not recognize a homeland. And yet—with Allah's blessing—countries that are strong in their beliefs and the cohesion among their leadership and people like the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia were not and will not be defeated; This how the forearms of the brave security men broke the oars of these criminals and terrorists.

**Arabic Language 5, Grades 10–12 [Exercises], Level 5, (Science and Administration), 2019, p. 66.**

The curriculum offers a historical description of the 1956 Suez Crisis and replaces "Islamic Resistance" with "Arab Resistance"—an attempt perhaps to distance students from Islamist terrorist groups.<sup>114</sup>

In another high-school Arabic textbook Muslims are lauded for their distinguished positions in various nations owing largely to their moderate attitudes. Yet "some of its sons" also bear responsibility for the clash of civilizations having abandoned moderation and choosing extremism. The emerging ideal seems to be that the Islamic civilization should be respected, moderate as one among others in the world.

ومن يجيل النظر في جوانب عظمة هذا الدين الذي أكرمنا الله به وهدانا إليه يجد أن هناك سمة بارزة ظاهرة كانت سبباً في تبوء هذه الأمة مكانتها المرموقة بين الأمم، ومنحها مؤهلات القيادة والريادة للبشرية، ومقومات الشهادة على الناس كافة. إنها سمة الاعتدال والوسطية التي تجلّي صور سماحة الإسلام، وتبرز محاسن هذا الدين ورعايته للمثل الأخلاقية العليا والقيم الإنسانية الكبرى، يقول الحق تبارك وتعالى: ﴿وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا﴾

[البقرة: ١٤٣]

والمواقف، ولئن آل حال العالم إلى ما نراه اليوم من صراع حضاري خطير فإن الأمل - بعد الله - في



أمة الوسطية والاعتدال أن تكبو من عثرتها وتضيّق من غفلتها وتجتمع من شتاتها، بعد أن عانت طويلاً من جراء تجاوزات بعض أبنائها والمحسوبين عليها عن منهج الوسطية في مجالات عقدية وفكرية

There is a prominent trait and apparent feature that was the reason why this nation assumed its distinguished position among nations, and granted it the qualifications of leadership and pioneering for humanity . . . it is the trait of the middle way (*wasatiyyah*) and moderation.

And while the world has turned into this dangerous civilizational conflict that we see today, the hope is—with the help of Allah—that the nation of the middle way and moderation will feel this stumbling block, wake up from its negligence and heal its schism, after suffering long from the excesses of some of its sons.

**Arabic Language 6, Grades 10–12, [Exercises], Level 5, (Science and Administration), 2019, pp. 69–71.**

Criticism of radical Islamism must be understood in the context of strict warnings against unjustified *takfir* of Muslims. The word *takfir* in Arabic means denouncing another Muslim—or non-Muslim—as a non-believer (*kafir*), potentially resulting in violence. Among other sources,

<sup>114</sup> *Social Studies*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2017, p. 139; *Social Studies*, Grades 10–12, (Joint Track), 2019, p. 68.

the text quotes Ibn Taymiyya, the fourteenth century Muslim scholar, although revered by Islamists, nevertheless warned against *takfir*.<sup>115</sup>

## Iran and Turkey

### Iran

Tensions with Iran as a regional adversary are manifested in longstanding Arab-Iranian quarrels over the name of the Gulf—Persian or Arabian. While the textbook reflects this traditional bickering, it is interesting that the conflict is framed in ethno-national terms: Arabs versus Iranians, rather than Sunni versus Shiite. A careful reading of the following text reveals that Iran is not referred to directly, nor are the Persians who comprise that country's most powerful ethnic group. The authors blame unspecified countries and their designs for the wrongful nomenclature of the "Persian" Gulf.

سمي الخليج العربي في المصادر القديمة  
بأسماء متعددة، منها:

(النهر المر) و (البحر الأدنى) و (بحر القatif  
العربي) و (بحر البصرة) و (خليج البصرة)،  
وسماه المؤرخ اليوناني بليني باسم (خليج  
العرب) وهو أقدم تسمية له مدونة في كتب  
التاريخ، وتحاول بعض الدول ترسيخ اسم  
(الخليج الفارسي) نتيجة لانتشار هذا الاسم  
في المصادر الغربية الحديثة، وهي تسمية  
حديثة غير صحيحة ولا تنطبق على الخليج  
الذي يحيط به العرب من الجانب الغربي في  
دول الخليج العربي، والجانب الشرقي الذي  
كان مكاناً للعديد من القبائل العربية، ولم  
ترد كذلك في التسميات التاريخية، بل لها  
أغراض مناوئة للعرب.

Ancient sources refer to the Arabian Gulf by many names, including: the Bitter River [*Al-nahr al-murr*], the Low Sea [*Al-bahr al-adna*], the Al-Qatif al-Arabi Sea, the Sea of Basra and the Gulf of Basra. The Greek historian, Pliny [the Elder] called it the Gulf of Arabs, which constitutes its earliest name in registered history books. Some countries try to implant the name Persian Gulf since this name is common in late Western sources. This designation is new and incorrect for the Gulf that is surrounded by Arabs: from the western side, the Arab states of the Gulf and from the eastern side inhabited by many

<sup>115</sup> *Tawhid 3*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019, p. 52.

Arab tribes. This also does not occur in historical designations; it is aimed at designs hostile to the Arabs.

**History, Grades 10–12** (Humanities), 2019, p. 38.

The curriculum is sensitive to political fluctuations; in the 2019 eighth grade *Social and National Studies* textbook, Iran was excluded from charts showing the nations bordering the Strait of Hormuz.



د - أكمل الجدول التالي بكتابة مضائق وقنوات العالم العربي والإسلامي:

المضيق أو القناة	يصل	الدول التي تطل عليه
هرمز	الخليج العربي ببحر عُمان	عُمان وإيران

**Complete the following chart by writing the straits and canals of the Arab and Islamic Worlds:**

[The table reads:] The Straits or the Canal: **Hormuz**. Connecting: **The Arab Gulf with the Sea of Oman**. Bordering States: **Oman and Iran**.

*Social and National Studies, Grade 8*, Vol. 2, 2017, p. 51.

د - ما مضائق العالم العربي والإسلامي وقنواته كما هو موضح بالمثال الأول في الجدول الآتي؟

المضيق أو القناة	يصل	الدول التي تطل عليه
هُرْمُز	الخليج العربي بخليج عُمان	سلطنة عُمان والإمارات العربية المتحدة

**D. Fill in the straits and canals of the Arab and Islamic Worlds as specified in the first example of the following chart?**

[The table reads:] **The Straits or the Canal:** Hormuz. **Connecting:** The Arab Gulf with the Gulf of Oman. **Bordering States:** The Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

*Social Studies and Civics, Grade 8*, Vol. 2, 2019, p. 100.

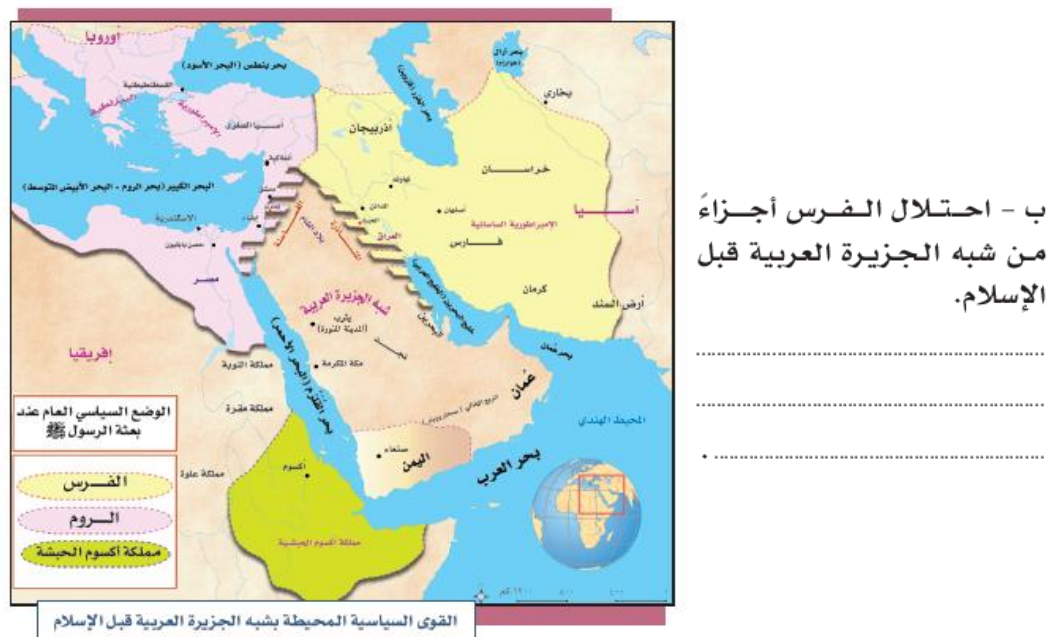
The attitude toward Iran, appears more radicalized in recent editions. While the 2017 *Social and National Studies* textbook points to Persian *influence* in the Arabian Peninsula, the 2019 text speaks about Persian *occupation*. (Both editions in the legend point to Byzantine and Ethiopian states).



Foreign powers influenced parts of the Arabian Peninsula during the mission of our Prophet Muhammad including the influence of the Persians which spread to the Eastern Coast and Yemen.

*Social and National Studies, Grade 7, Vol. 2, 2017, p. 21.*

The 2019 edition employs harsher language.



'Political forces surrounding the

Arabian Peninsula before Islam'

B. Partial Occupation by the Persians of the Arabian Peninsula before Islam.

*Social Studies and Civics, Grade 7, Vol. 2, 2019, p. 15.*



There is little discussion in the curriculum about Iran's culture or historical importance. As part of the Arabian Peninsula, Iran is not completely ignored, although generally the context for students is seen in Islam's conquest of Iran, rather than recognizing Iran as a civilization in its own right. For example, in the 2019 sixth-grade *Social and National Studies* textbook, students learn that the geographical bridge Saudi Arabia forms with various cultures—Chinese, Indian, Ethiopian, Babylonian and Egyptian among them—glaringly omits its neighboring Persian-Iranian culture.<sup>116</sup>

### Countering Iran

The curriculum presents Saudi foreign policy as one of preserving stability in the region—which includes containing terrorism and radicalism. This position is given as justification for the controversial Saudi intervention in Yemen's civil war (which can also be seen as an attempt to counterbalance the just-as-controversial Iranian penetration into that Arab country).



أصبحت السياسة الخارجية في عهد الملك  
سلمان بن عبدالعزيز فاعلة ومؤثرة؛ نتيجة  
لمكانتها وإمكاناتها ومبادئها. فقد تحرّك الموقف  
السعودي لحماية الشرعية اليمنية، ومحاربة  
الإرهاب والتطرف، ومساندة الجهود الدولية  
لدعم الاستقرار في المنطقة العربية.

Foreign policy during King Salman bin Abd al-Aziz's rule became active and influential, the result of its status, capabilities and origins [Saudi Arabia]. The Saudi stance followed the direction to maintain legitimacy in Yemen, fighting terrorism and extremism, and supporting international efforts to strengthen stability in the Arab region.

**History, Grades 10–12, 2019, p. 166.**

<sup>116</sup> Discussion is in Unit 8 "Geography and Society," Lesson 13 "National Location." *Social Studies and Civics*, Grade 6, Vol. 2, 2019, p. 90.



### Historical Animus toward Iran and Zoroastrians Persist

Following is a description of the assassination of Umar ibn Al-Khattab, the Muslim conqueror of Sassanian Iran by a captive Iranian soldier named Piruz Nahavandi (Arabic: Abu Lu'lu'ah). While this murder was possibly related to an argument about money, the narrative presents an Iranian conspiracy.

دَبَّرَ المَجُوسُ مِنْ بِلَادِ فَارَسٍ قَتْلَ الْخَلِيفَةِ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ ﷺ الَّذِي نَشَرَ الْإِسْلَامَ فِي فَارَسٍ وَالشَّامِ؛ اِنْتِقَاماً مِنْهُ، فَأَرْسَلُوا أَبَا لَوْلُؤَةَ فَيْرُوزَ الْمَجُوسِيِّ الَّذِي كَانَ يَخْدُمُ عِنْدَ أَحَدِ الصَّحَابَةِ ﷺ، فَطَعَنَ الْخَلِيفَةَ عُمَرَ ﷺ وَهُوَ فِي أَوَّلِ صَلَاةِ الْفَجْرِ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ النَّبَوِيِّ بِالْمَدِينَةِ الْمُنَوَّرَةِ.

The 'majus' [pejorative for Zoroastrian] from the Land of Persia [*bilad fars*] plotted to murder the Caliph Umar ibn Al-Khattab who spread Islam in Persia and Al-Sham [Levant, greater Syria] to take revenge against him. They sent Abu Lu'lu'ah Fairuz *Al-Majusi*, who worked at the service of one of the Sahaba [The Prophet's friends]. He stabbed Caliph Umar while beginning of his dawn prayer at the Prophet's Mosque [*Al-Masjid an-Nabawi*] in Holy Medina.

***Social Studies and Civics, Grade 5, Vol. 1, 2019, p. 22.***

A follow-up question in the Saudi textbook clarifies that "The expansion of the Rashidun Caliphate [632–61] raised the hatred of enemies."<sup>117</sup> Note that in the textbook Umar spread, or propagated, Islam in Persia and the Levant (but didn't conquer these territories).

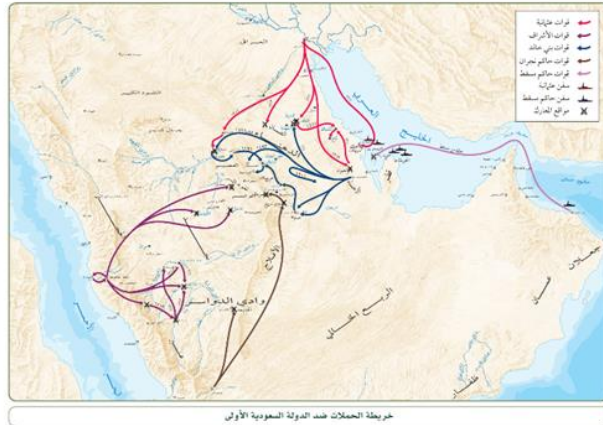
### Turkey (the Ottomans)

Historically, the Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula were not always loyal to the Ottoman Sunni Caliphate—ruled mainly by ethnic Turks from faraway Istanbul. The Ottoman history during the classical age is represented as an age of prosperity and culture.<sup>118</sup> As to their relations with the Saudi state, they are portrayed as cruel, powerful and deceitful. The Hashemite Arab revolt in the Hijaz, made famous by the 1962 movie, *Laurence of Arabia*, was in fact not more consequential than the Saudi-Wahhabi revolution, particularly for the Saudis. In the following excerpts, the notion that the Saudi-Wahhabi state was motivated by radical Wahhabi religious tenets is described as an Ottoman propaganda ploy. That Wahhabism is not a legitimate religious school is also described as a malicious Ottoman invention. The text concentrates on the Arabian Peninsula but also on Arabs in general. As with Iran, Turkey—despite its support of the Muslim Brotherhood—is not criticized directly.

<sup>117</sup> *Social Studies and Civics, Grade 5, Vol. 1, 2019, p. 22.* The textbook doesn't use the term: "Rashidun Caliphate" but: *dawlat al-khulafa' al-rashidin* to represent the "Orthodox Caliph State."

<sup>118</sup> *History and National Education 2, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (Administration, Literature and Qur'an), 2019, pp. 48–55.*

يعود المسبب الرئيس لنهاية الدولة السعودية الأولى إلى تكالب الأعداء عليها نتيجة لقوتها واتساع نفوذها وسمو رسالتها التي وجدت انتشاراً كبيراً في الجزيرة العربية وخارجها. وتعد الدولة العثمانية من أبرز أعداء الدولة السعودية الأولى التي حرصت وعملت لإنهائها بكل الوسائل منذ لحظة ضمها الحجاز وتوليها خدمة الحرمين الشريفين خدمة صحيحة. فالدولة العثمانية رأت في الدولة السعودية خطراً على بقائها بعد فقدانها الحجاز، وشرف الإشراف على الحرمين الشريفين من جهة، وخشيته من امتداد الدولة السعودية الأولى إلى مواقع نفوذ الدولة العثمانية في المنطقة العربية من جهة أخرى.



The Ottoman state is considered to be among the most prominent enemies of the first Saudi state. It has worked and made every effort to eliminate [the Saudi state] from the moment it annexed the Hijaz and committed itself to perform the service [*khidma sahiha*] of the Two Holy Mosques properly. The Ottoman state therefore saw the Saudi state as a danger to its very existence: On the one hand, it lost the Hijaz and the honor of administer the two Holy Mosques; and, on the other, it feared the spread of the first Saudi state into Ottoman spheres of influence in the Arab region.

**History, Grades 10–12** (Humanities), 2019, p. 98.

Most experts would agree that the foundation of legitimacy in Saudi Arabia is the alliance of the Saud family with Wahhabism. Yet the designation of the Wahhabi state is seen here as a distortion and denigration—a propaganda play by the Ottomans.

## ٢- التشويه السياسي والديني:

عملت الدولة العثمانية لتشويه حقيقة الدولة السعودية الأولى ببت المعلومات غير الصحيحة عن مبادئها، مثل: تسميتها بالدولة الوهابية، والقول بأن الدولة السعودية الأولى اتخذت مذهباً جديداً، وزيّفت الحقائق في هذا الشأن.

## 2- Political and Religious Distortion

The Ottoman state has acted to distort the underlying truth in the first Saudi state by disseminating false information about its principles. Examples include dubbing it the "The Wahhabi State" and the claim that the first Saudi state adopted a new legal religious school [*madhhab*]. And it forged the facts in this matter.

**History, Grades 10–12** (Humanities), 2019, p. 100.

Another way the curriculum explains the Saudi worldview is by depicting the Ottomans as foreign invaders whereas the Saudis are portrayed as citizens defending the homeland. The "evil" Ottomans are the pan-Muslims; the Caliphate has practically no legitimacy.

واجهت القوات العثمانية الغازية حال وصولها  
إلى أراضي الدولة السعودية الأولى صوراً رائعة من  
الدفاع والاستبسال من قادة الدولة ومواطنيها في  
أنحائها كافة. والدليل على هذا تلك الخسائر التي  
أحدثها السعوديون في القوات العثمانية الغازية  
المتعددة، والمدة التي استغرقتها تلك الحملات لإنهاء  
الدولة السعودية الأولى، وهي أكثر من ثماني سنوات  
بدأت في عام ١٢٢٦هـ وتضمنت عشرات الحملات  
ومئات الألوف من الغزاة المقاتلين ذوي الجنسيات  
المتعددة ومئات المدافع. وعلى الرغم من استبسال  
السعوديين ودفاعهم فإن الدولة السعودية انهزمت  
بعد كل هذه الحملات الكبيرة، وسقطت عاصمتها  
عام ١٢٢٣هـ.

### **The First Saudi State: Some Defensive Battles (1226–29 Hijri [1811–14])**

Upon their arrival in the territory of the first Saudi state, the invading Ottoman forces encountered spectacular scenes of defense and heroism by leaders of the state and citizens throughout the country. Proof of this are the losses inflicted by the Saudis upon the numerous Ottoman invading forces as well as the long duration of these campaigns until the elimination of the first Saudi State over a period of eight years.

**History, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019, p. 100.**

Finally, the curriculum also blames the Turks for losing WWI and as a consequence of losing such territories as "Palestine": "The situation [of Jews living under Islamic sovereignty in Palestine] remained so until the end of WWI, when the Allies prevailed against the Turks and their German allies."<sup>119</sup>

### **Tribes and Non-National Actors**

The "invading" Ottoman Empire is condemned also because of periods of inefficiency and suffering leading to uprisings by local populations. The curriculum reminds students that the *nation state* of Saudi Arabia provides the best future solution for the country (including as it relates to Muslim pilgrims). The following text criticizes the Ottoman Empire as well as smaller tribal forces unconnected to the Saudi state:

<sup>119</sup> *Social Studies, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 63.*



Saudi King Abdul-Aziz fighting to unite Saudi Arabia

### ؟ كيف كان الأمن قبل توحيد البلاد؟

- بعد انتهاء الدولة السعودية الثانية، كانت الأوضاع الأمنية تتسم بما يأتي:
- ◆ كثرة الخلافات، والنزاعات؛ بسبب تعدد الولاءات غير الوطنية.
  - ◆ سيطرة الظلم، وشيوع الفقر في المناطق التي تسيطر عليها الدولة العثمانية الغازية.
  - ◆ شيوع الدُّعْر، والخوف، وانتشار القتل، وقُطَاع الطرق والمفسدين في الأرض.
  - ◆ قَتْل الحُجَّاج القادمين إلى مكة المكرمة والمدينة المنورة، وسلب أموالهم وأمتعتهم.

### What was the security situation before the unification of the country?

After the end of the second Saudi state, the security situation was characterized as follows:

- Multiple conflicts and struggles due to a multitude of anti-nationalist loyalties.
- Reign of injustice and spread of poverty in the regions controlled by the invading (ghaziya) Ottoman state.
- Panic and fear common. Spread of killing, robbery and corruptors of the earth.<sup>120</sup>
- Killing Pilgrims coming to Mecca and Medina; stealing their money and property.

*Social Studies and Civics, Grade 6, Vol. 2, 2019, p. 19.*

<sup>120</sup> A capital sin in Islam. Sometimes translated as, those who "make mischief in the earth." (Al-Baqarah 2: 27), <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2002.02.0006%3Asura%3D2%3Averse%3D27>.



المدينة المنورة قديماً

### "Holy Medina in the Past"

وتمكنوا من دخولها. استبسل السعوديون المرابطون والأهالي للدفاع عن المدينة المنورة، ولكن ضخامة القوات الغازية وشراستها دون مراعاة لحرمة أرض المدينة المنورة التي بها مسجد النبي ﷺ ومثواه، أدت إلى استسلام السعوديين بشرط تجنب الإضرار بالمدينة المنورة أو التعرض لأهاليها. لم تلتزم القوات الغازية العهد، فبعد دخولها بدأت ترمي بالمدافع لقتل المزيد. وأورد المؤرخ عثمان بن بشر تفاصيل

The Saudi fighters [*Murabitun*] and people showed extreme courage in protecting Holy Medina. But the huge numbers of the invading forces and their wickedness in having no respect for the sanctity of the city where the Prophet's mosque and shrine exist, led the Saudis to surrender. They did this on condition that [the Ottomans] would not damage the city or harm its inhabitants. The invading forces did not comply with the treaty, and after entering [the city] began firing cannons to kill more.

*History, Grades 10–12* (Humanities), 2019, p. 100.

## The Jews and Israel

### The Jews

The rancor held by many orthodox Islam adherents toward Jews stems from conflicts with Jewish-Arabian tribes at Islam's founding. While clashes also occurred with other tribes, the Jews posed a theological challenge—and a disappointment. Early Muslims felt that Jews, as monotheists, should have known better and joined the Prophet. At first, much effort and good will (such as making Jerusalem the direction of prayer) were devoted toward inviting them to the fold.<sup>121</sup> Once it became clear that most Jews would not join Islam, a mixed policy followed,

<sup>121</sup> "He chose the Holy House in Jerusalem in order that the People of the Book [i.e., Jews] would be conciliated," notes Al-Tabari, an early Muslim commentator on the Qur'an, "and the Jews were glad." Al-Tabari, *Jami` al-Bayan*



combining tolerance, separation, and at times, confrontations. Moving Islam's direction of prayer from Jerusalem to Mecca drew a distinct line between the two faiths, each having its own center. But this also meant confrontations in the Hijaz, seen as the pure center of the budding Islam.

This uneasiness with the Jews, seemingly put aside in various periods of history, has reemerged in the modern age. Israel's independence once again poses a theological challenge for some Muslims. While the logic of the Prophet appears to have been: "Islam is centered in the Hijaz and Jews in their Levantine homeland,"<sup>122</sup> the very existence of an independent Israel in the Levant appears to be an impossible concept for many Saudi Muslims to grasp. The Saudi curriculum struggles with this issue as well.

This back-and-forth over how to deal with Jews is apparent when examining different editions of the curriculum. Following is a short comparison between the 2017 and 2019 editions of the seventh grade *Social and Citizenship Education* textbook (Vol. 2). The last edition covers more nationalism-related material. It is also less confrontational with respect to the Christians and Jews.

In the "Prophet Period" of the 2019 edition, Jews are described often, both negatively, as in the Battle of the Trench (Khandaq) and in positive terms as they are presented in the Medina Document. The Battle of Khaybar, in which Muhammad's followers fought Jewish tribes, is not included this edition. In 2017 however, this historical episode was relayed with heavy anti-Jewish messaging. The following examples demonstrate this:

**The Medina Document** (known also as the Constitution of Medina) is generally considered to be an example of tolerance toward non-Muslims, in this case mainly Jews. In the 2017 textbook, conflict and the supposed treachery of the Jews in Medina were emphasized; the 2019 edition focuses on agreement and tolerance toward Jews.

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*fi Tafsir al-Qur'an* (Cairo, 1321/1903), quoted in F. E. Peters, *Jerusalem* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 181, quoted in: Daniel Pipes, "The Muslim Claim to Jerusalem," *Middle East Quarterly*, (Fall 2001): pp. 49–66,

<https://www.meforum.org/490/the-muslim-claim-to-jerusalem?gclid=CNfvr8TDkp4CFUYA4wodJjsMog>.

<sup>122</sup> Nissim Dana, *The Struggle for Jerusalem and the Holy Land: A New Inquiry into the Qur'an and Classic Islamic Sources on the People of Israel, their Torah, and the Land*, Brookline, MA: Academic Studies Press, May 2014; Qanta A. Ahmed, "Jerusalem Belongs to the Jews: An Islamic Truth" *The Times of Israel*, January 26, 2018, <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/jerusalem-belongs-to-the-jews-an-islamic-truth/>;

Sinem Tezyapar, "The Abuse of Islam as Part of the Demonization of Israel," The Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 2014,

[https://jcpa.org/overview\\_palestinian\\_manipulation/the\\_abuse\\_of\\_islam\\_as\\_part\\_of\\_the\\_demonization\\_of\\_israel/](https://jcpa.org/overview_palestinian_manipulation/the_abuse_of_islam_as_part_of_the_demonization_of_israel/).



وثيقة المدينة ٣

رأى نبينا ﷺ أن ينظم علاقاته في المدينة المنورة مع يهود بني قينقاع، وبني النضير، وبني قريظة الذين قدموا للاستقرار في المدينة وليسوا من أهلها؛ ليعم الأمن والتعايش بين طوائف المجتمع بسلام، فعقد معهم معاهدة باسم وثيقة المدينة تقوم على:

ممارسة اليهود لعباداتهم	العيش في أمن وسلام
تجنب التآمر على المسلمين، أو التستر على من يكيد لهم	أن يكونوا عوناً للمدينة في صدّ العدوان عنها

### The Medina Document

Our Prophet saw fit to establish his relationship in Holy Medina with the Jews of the Banu Qaynuqa, Banu Nadir and Banu Qurayza, who had come to live in the city but were not part of its people. This was to ensure security and peaceful coexistence among the sectors of the society. He made a covenant with them called the Document of Medina, based on the following principles: Living in security and peace; the Jews [would] practice their religion; help Medina to repel aggression against the city; and avoid conspire against Muslims, or shelter those who plot against them.

*Social Studies and Civics, Grade 7, Vol. 2, 2019, p. 38.*

The 2017 textbook represented a more rigid, xenophobic, worldview. Note that in the following text Jews were lumped with the Polytheists, clear enemies of Islam:

### Third: The Treaty with the Jews:

#### Who were the people of Medina before the advent of our Prophet into the city?

Our Prophet saw fit to establish his relationship with the non-Muslims in Medina, namely the Polytheists and the Jews (Banu Qaynuqa, Banu Nadir and Banu Qurayza), in order to ward off their danger and to close the breaches before them [metaphor for signing a contract]. So he signed a treaty with them . . .

Regardless of the treaty, the Jews succumbed to their treacherous and perfidious nature, and returned evil for good. They rejected the message of Muhammad even though they knew it was truthful. They began to alienate people from Islam and cast doubt on its origins and teachings. They even claimed that paganism was better [than Islam] and they did not leave any means to fight Islam and the Muslims without resorting to it.

*Social and National Studies, Grade 7, Vol. 2, 2017, p. 86.*

The 2017 edition does not deal with the Medina conflicts as a historical episode in a particular context. Jewish treachery is assumed to be eternal and still relevant. This is clear from a question about a country that "still suffers from the treachery of Jews." Students thus learn that

treachery is part of being Jewish. To avoid any misunderstanding, this question was removed from the 2019 edition.

٣- ما الدولة التي لا تزال تعاني من غدر اليهود؟

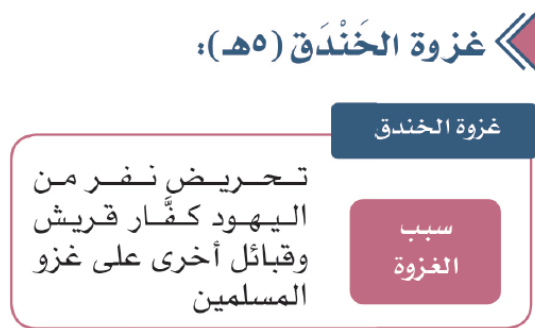
Which country still suffers from the treachery of the Jews?

*Social and National Studies, Grade 7, Vol. 2, 2017, p. 86.*

**Distortion of Holy Books.** The 2017 textbook accused Christians and Jews of pre-Islam Arabia of distorting their holy books: "[Judaism's] book is the Torah, which was distorted by the Jews themselves"<sup>123</sup>; "[Christianity's] book is the Gospel [*inji*] which was distorted by the Christians themselves."<sup>124</sup> The 2019 text removes such characterizations.<sup>125</sup>

**The Isra and Mi'raj.** The 2019 edition removed a graphic presentation of the *isra* (night journey) and *mi'raj* (ascension), the Prophet's legendary night journey typically associated with Jerusalem, holy city to both Christians and Jews; it was included in the previous 2017 textbook.<sup>126</sup> The 2019 book focuses on Saudi issues and avoids this sensitive issue (which exists in other parts of the curriculum).

**The Battle of the Trench.** Jews are blamed for helping the enemies of Islam (Arab tribes) in this well-known battle for control of Medina. Note that the text speaks about "a group of Jews" not *the* Jews in general.



**Battle of the Trench (5 Hijri):**

**Cause of the Battle:** A group of Jews who incited the infidels of Quraysh and other tribes to attack the Muslims.

*Social Studies and Civics, Grade 7, Vol. 2, 2019, p. 44.*

<sup>123</sup> *Social and National Studies, Grade 7, Vol. 2, 2017, p. 16.*

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

**The Battle of Khaybar.** Unlike the 2017 textbook on social and citizen education, the 2019 edition does not include the Battle of Khaybar or the hostile messaging toward Jews.<sup>127</sup> The 2017 text described a Banu Nadir tribe plan to kill the Prophet and taught that all the Jews of Khaybar posed a growing threat to the Muslims "because of their deception, dishonesty and treachery."<sup>128</sup> The text also highlighted an episode from the hadith about a Jewish woman who tried to poison the Prophet.<sup>129</sup>

ازداد تهديد يهود خيبر للمسلمين، خصوصاً بعد أن  
انضمت إليهم يهود بني النضير، حيث مثل الجميع خطراً  
على المسلمين؛ لما فيهم من مكر وخديعة وغدر؛ لذا قرر  
نبينا ﷺ التوجه لقتالهم، بعد أن أمن جانب قريش عقب  
صلح الحديبية.

The threat of the Jews of Khaybar to Muslims increased especially after they were joined by the Jews of Bani Nadir. All of them posed a danger to the Muslims because of their deception, dishonesty and treachery. So our Prophet decided to go to fight them after he secured the side of Quraysh following the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah.

*Social and National Studies, Grade 7, Vol. 2, 2017, p.110.*

In another example, Jews are removed from a Qur'anic interpretation of a surah in 2019. The 2017 and 2018 textbooks explain "the machinations of **the Jews** and their desire to break up the Islamic ranks." The 2019 interpretation eliminates Jews from the explanation: "the machinations of **those who seek** to break up the Islamic ranks" (bold added).<sup>130</sup>

### Jews—Portrayed as Assassins

Jews are depicted in some cases as murderers or as attempting murders of prominent figures. The following is an excerpt from the hadith legend about the Jewish woman testing the Prophet with poison after the Battle of Khaybar (not in the 2019 *Social Studies and Civics* textbook but is found in a 2019 religious book).<sup>131</sup> Note the demonization of the Jews, but also compassion toward them:

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., pp. 108–10.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., p.110.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> *Tafsir 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2017, p.116; Tafsir 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2018, p.116; Tafsir 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019, p.112.*

<sup>131</sup> *Hadith and Sira, Grade 6, Vol. 2, 2019, p. 41.*



### To Examine

When the Messenger of Allah relaxed after the conquest of Khaybar, a Jewish woman served him a poisoned roasted ewe. When he held it in his hands—he was accompanied by the Sahabi [Prophet's companion] Bashar bin al-Bara'—the Messenger of Allah took the leg. Bashar took the same from it as did the Messenger of Allah. Still, the Messenger of Allah chewed a morsel, but did not swallow it and spit it out. Bashar, however, took from it and happily swallowed it. Then the Prophet said: 'This bone tells me it is poisoned.' He called her and she confessed. He asked: "What led you to do such a thing?" She answered: 'What happened to my people is well known to you, so I said to myself, if he is a king I'll get rid of him, and if he is a Prophet, he will be informed [and saved].' So the Messenger of Allah forgave her.

***Social and National Studies, Grade 7, Vol. 2, 2017, p.110.***

In another textbook for fourth-graders, the Jews are accused of trying to kill Jesus: "Finally, the Israelite infidels (*kuffar*) conspired against Jesus and tried to kill him."<sup>132</sup> A high-school Islamic-studies textbook adds: "Their criminality then increased and they killed Zechariah and John, and tried to kill Jesus."<sup>133</sup>

There are more examples of Jews killing, committing fratricide or plotting the Prophet's death. One example is that of Abdullah Ibn Saba, as a Jew who pretended to be Muslim and orchestrated the assassination of Othman.<sup>134</sup> Ibn Saba is blamed for the Sunni-Shiite split, which continues to divide the Islamic world. Another example is the anecdote about "a group of Jews" wishing death to the Prophet by greeting him with "As-Sam Alaykum"! [Poison be upon you!] instead of "As-Salam Alaykum"! [Peace be upon you!]. Paradoxically, the latter is presented as an example of the Prophet's generosity and tolerance. Instead of punishing the

<sup>132</sup> *Social Studies and Civics, Grade 4, Vol. 2, 2019, p. 70.*

<sup>133</sup> *Hadith and Islamic Culture 3, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), (2017), p. 325.*

<sup>134</sup> *Tawhid 3, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019, p. 174.*

cursing Jews, the Prophet told his startled wife Aisha that he had answered in kind: "And upon you"! Thus displaying both a sense of humor and tolerance.<sup>135</sup>

Among the quotes that led to waves of criticism against the Saudi educational system was one of the passages of a tenth-grade Saudi textbook on monotheism: "The Hour will not come until Muslims will fight the Jews, and Muslims will kill all the Jews."<sup>136</sup> This hadith is still included in the last three editions of the curriculum (2017–19). What follows is the example from the latest edition:



**5-Fighting the Jews:** Reported by Abu Hurairah: The Messenger of Allah had said: "The Hour of Resurrection will not come until the Muslims fight the Jews. The Muslims will kill them, and when a Jew would hide behind a rock or a tree, the rock or the tree would say: 'O Muslim, O worshipper of God! There is a Jew behind me; come and kill him,' except the salt bush (Gharqad), which is one of trees of the Jews."

**Tawhid 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019, p. 86.**

In another hadith, this new textbook<sup>137</sup> clarifies that each and every infidel (*kafir*) will perish on the Day of Resurrection. As for the less-than-perfect believers, their fate depends on their behavior and Allah's compassion. Yet another hadith explains that good deeds are not taken into account for the infidels (*kuffar*), for they have none.<sup>138</sup>

The following, an introduction to Sura Al-Baqarah, portrays the Jews as a bad example and as a danger to believers. One has to wait until such time that fighting them will be allowed. In the Qur'an the text speaks about members of the People of the Book, a more general term:

<sup>135</sup> *Hadith and Sira*, Grade 6, Vol. 1, 2019, p. 101.

<sup>136</sup> Charles M. Sennott, "Saudi Schools Fuel Anti-U.S. Anger," *Boston Globe*, April 3, 2002.

<sup>137</sup> *Tawhid 2*, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019, p. 100; See also: *Tafsir 3*, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019, pp. 21–22, 28.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p.109.

## تمهيد:

يرد الله تعالى على الطاعنين في وحيه، القائلين أن محمدًا يأمر أصحابه اليوم بأمر، وينهاهم عنه غدًا، بأنه تعالى له الحكمة البالغة فهو ينسخ ما يشاء من الأحكام لحكم يعلمها سبحانه، كما يرشدنا تعالى إلى التسليم لله والانقياد لنبيه ﷺ والتحذير من مشابهة قوم موسى حين سألوا نبيهم ما لا ينبغي، ويخبر سبحانه بأن الكثير من اليهود تمنوا لو أرجعواكم إلى الكفر، لأنهم يحسدونكم على الهداية والإسلام، فاصفحوا حتى يأذن الله بقتالهم أو إجلالهم، وقوموا بأداء العبادات لتنالوا ثواب الله تعالى.

[Admonishing the believers not to doubt the authenticity of Muhammad's message, the text] warns about resembling the people of Moses when they asked their Prophet what should not be asked. Allah informed that many Jews wish to return you to infidelity [*kufra*] because they are envious of the guidance and Islam. Ignore [them] until Allah will permit fighting banishing them . . .

**Tafsir 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019, p. 67.**

### Jews Turned into "Real Monkeys" [by Allah]

The curriculum interprets a Qur'anic surah (A'raf 7:163–66), which narrates the story of one group of Jews who (in pre-Islamic times) did not respect the Sabbath and set fishing nets to catch fish during the day. The text refers to the changing of a group of Jews by Allah into "real monkeys" ruling out other, gentler interpretations that usually view this as a metaphor.<sup>139</sup>

٣- بطلان الحيل المؤدية إلى تعطيل شرع الله، وتجاوز حدوده، وارتكاب محارمه كما فعل

اليهود حين وضعوا الشباك في البحر يوم الجمعة للصيد، ثم يخرجونها يوم الأحد، ويقولون: لم نعمل يوم السبت شيئاً.

٦- إن الله تعالى عاقب الظالمين من اليهود بأن مسخهم فجعلهم قردة حقيقية.

3. Falsehood of the deception leading to the disruption of the law of Allah, breaking limits (*hudud*)<sup>140</sup> set by Him, and performing what He forbids. The way the Jews acted when they threw their nets into the sea on Friday for fishing, and then pulled the nets out on Sunday. And they say: 'we did not do anything on Saturday [the Sabbath].'

6. Allah punished [these] Jewish oppressors by turning them into real monkeys.

**Tafsir 1, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 73.**

While one can find more examples of extreme anti-Jewish polemic in this Qur'anic commentary textbook, the 2017 edition of this very same book includes more such examples. In other words, there is a certain toning down of rhetoric even in pure religious polemic that mimics hate messaging. Examples of the removed subject matter follow:

<sup>139</sup> *Tafsir 1, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, pp. 72–73.*

<sup>140</sup> *Hudud* are sins against Allah that cannot be pardoned.



الأمة الإسلامية خير الأمم، وأعظمها منزلة، حملت مشعل الهداية، وقادت البشرية لما فيه عزها ورفعتها، وقضت على الخرافة والدجل، وأرست قواعد العدل، وقد نالت هذه الخيرية مقابل تكاليف شاقة، أهمها: الإيمان بالله، والحرص على هداية خلق الله، والأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر..  
وما على أهل الكتاب لينهلوا من هذه الخيرية، والاستضاءة بهذا النور، إلا أن يؤمنوا بالله رباً، وبالإسلام ديناً، وبمحمد ﷺ رسلاً، فإن أبوا فالذل والصغار، وغضب الجبار، جزاء وفاءً.

The Islamic nation is the best of all nations, and their greatest in status. It carried the torch of guidance, led humanity to glory and eminence, eliminated superstition and charlatanism, and established the rules of justice. It has received this in return for harsh sacrifices, the most important of which are faith in Allah, care for the guidance of Allah's creation, and the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice.

For the People of the Book to drink from this benevolence, and be lighted by this light, they should only believe in Allah as God, Islam as religion, and Muhammad as messenger. And if they refuse, as a proper punishment they deserve humiliation and servility and the anger of the Mighty.

**Tafsir 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2017, p. 78.**

The textbook then explains<sup>141</sup> that in this particular case the People of the Book are specifically the Jews. While this text has been removed in the 2019 edition, the idea that Islam is the one and only legitimate religion is presented elsewhere in the curriculum and is not meant to be merely theological, but has practical dimensions. Zionism's claims of religious-historical rights are seen by one textbook as invalid because the Jews refused to recognize the truthfulness of Muhammad. (It also claims they distorted the Hebrew Bible, so it cannot be considered a reliable source as to the ownership of "Palestine.")

وهذا الحق - المزعوم - ساقط؛ لأن (العهد القديم) قد ثبت تحريفه، فلا يستبعد أن تكون هذه الوعود من التحريف الذي داخل أسفاره، ثم إن هذه الوعود - على فرض صحتها - مشروطة بطاعة الله تعالى، وهم قد عصوه وخالفوا أمره، مما أمروا به: تصديق النبي محمد ﷺ، وهم لم يفعلوا ذلك.

### الحق الديني

ومضمونه «الوعد الإلهي» لأنبياء بني إسرائيل - عليهم السلام - بتمليكهم ونسلهم ما بين النيل إلى الفرات».

## The Religious Claim to Jerusalem

Its content is the 'Divine Promise to the prophet of the Israelites—peace be upon them—titling them and their offspring to possess what lies between the Nile and the Euphrates [Rivers].'

But this—alleged—right falls [short]. That is because the Old Testament has been proved distorted and it is not unlikely that these promises are included in the distortions within its books. And then, these promises—even if we assume their correctness—are conditional on obeying Allah. But they rebelled against Him and disobeyed Him.

<sup>141</sup> Tafsir 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2017, p. 79.

Among what they had been commanded: to recognize the truthfulness of the Prophet Muhammad, but they did not do so.

**Hadith 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019, pp. 253–254.**

The notion of Islam's superiority unavoidably deprives the Jews of their rights. It also justifies *jihad* wars aimed at expanding the lands of Islam.



امتَنَّ الله تعالى على هذه الأمة عن بقية الأمم بأن شرع لها الجهاد، وسخرها لنشر دينه في شتى أنحاء الأرض، ورزقها التمكين والسيادة على باقي الأمم، وحين قام أسلافنا الأوَّلون بالجهاد على الوجه الذي أَراده الله تعالى، وطبَّقوا شرعه الذي أمر به، وعَمروا الأرض بما يرضيه، دانت لهم البلاد بمن عليها، ودبَّ الرُّعب والمهابة في قلوب أعدائها.

### Introduction

Allah has generously given this nation more than the rest of the nations in that He had provided the *jihad* for it. He recruited [the Islamic nation] to spread His religion throughout the world and granted it control and sovereignty over the other nations. When our first forefathers initiated *jihad* in the way wished for by Allah, performed His religious [*shar'*] as He had commanded, and inhabited the land the way that satisfied Him, the land and those living on it obeyed them [Muslims]. Horror and awe filled the hearts of this [nation's] enemies.

**Hadith and Islamic Culture 5, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Science and Administration), 2019, p. 124.**

The Saudi curriculum calls for *wasatiyyah*, which means moderation or middle road while simultaneously allowing theological criticism of non-Muslims. At times, as in the following 2017 example, (later removed), the criticism combines theology and incitement. In other cases, as in the next example from 2019, it is mainly theological. To be fair, similar arguments are also launched against radical and violent Muslims and modern Western culture:

دين الأنبياء وسط بين الغلو والجفاء، ولقد غلا النصارى في عيسى حتى ألَّهوه وعبدوه، وابتدعوا رهبانية تحرم الطيبات، وتمنع اللذات، وتدمر الحياة، وكان من اليهود الجفاء والتفريط، وقتل الأنبياء، والإعراض عن دينهم. ولقد لعن الله السابقين منهم واللاحقين، على السنة أنبيائهم، بسبب عصيانهم، وعدم تناهيهم عن المنكر، ولميلهم إلى الكفار وتوليهم، وذلك بالدفاع عنهم، وحمايتهم من جهاد المؤمنين الصادقين.

The religion of the prophets is a middle way between exaggeration and alienation. The Christians have exaggerated by glorifying Jesus and worshipping him as God. They originated [a heretic] monasticism depriving the goods, preventing pleasures, and destroying life. And from the Jews there was alienation and inattention, and the killing of the prophets, and renunciation of their religion.

Allah has cursed the former [Jews] among them and the subsequent [Christians], in the sayings of their prophets, because of their disobedience, failing to denounce evil, and

because of their inclination to the infidels [*kuffar*], tending, defending and protecting them from the *jihad* of the faithful believers.

**Tafsir 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities) 2017, p. 221.**

عنها التشبيه والتمثيل والتعطيل، قال الله تعالى: ﴿لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ﴾<sup>(١)</sup>. قال ابن تيمية رحمه الله: (فالمسلمون في صفات الله تعالى وسط بين اليهود الذين شَبَّهوا الخالق بال مخلوق... وبين النصارى الذين شَبَّهوا المخلوق بالخالق، والمسلمون وصفوا الخالق بصفات الكمال ونزهوه عن صفات النقص)<sup>(٢)</sup>.

❷ عقيدة المسلم وسط في أنبياء الله ورسله وكتبه، فيؤمنون بها جميعاً، خالفوا النصارى الذين غلوا في عيسى عليه السلام، واليهود الذين كذبوه وحاربوه.

Ibn Taymiyyah said: 'As far as Allah's attributes are concerned, the Muslims take a middle ground between the Jews who equated the Creator with the created and the Christians, who equated the created to the Creator. The Muslims describe the Creator with attributes of perfection and consider Him above the attributes of imperfection.'

4. The Muslim doctrine takes the middle ground on the prophets of Allah, His messengers and His books. They believe in all of them. They disagree with the Christians who exaggerated about Jesus, and are in contrast to the Jews who accused him of lying and fought him.

**Hadith and Islamic Culture 5, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Science and Administration), 2019, p. 111.**

Despite the historical bad blood, the Saudi curriculum recognizes (with most of Islam) the contribution of all three monotheistic religions that have together made a significant impact on the world. Contradictorily, there are images of the two mosques of Mecca and Medina and Al-Aqsa Mosque, but no church or synagogue included at the bottom of the textbook page.

٢- أنه مهد الديانات السماوية الثلاث: (اليهودية،  
والنصرانية، والإسلام).

[It [the Arab-Islamic world] is the cradle of the three heavenly religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

**Social Studies and Civics, Grade 8, Vol. 2, 2019, p. 98.**

## Israel

### Social Studies and Civics Textbooks

As long as Arab-Israeli conflict persists, Saudi allegiance to Arab causes remains a matter of honor. The attitude toward Israel is influenced by Saudi Arabia's self-image as a key actor in the

Arab arena as well as Islam's uneasiness with Jewish independence. Yet the curriculum as a whole suggests that the kingdom's primary interests lie in rejuvenating society and economic progress. To accomplish its 2030 Vision goals, a stable and harmonious region is vital. Defense concerns obviously play a role as well.

The curriculum's attitude toward Israel is in flux and remains uneasy, with many inconsistencies throughout. Apologetic undertones to the local radical population are seen particularly in the 2019 edition, which stresses added support for the Palestinian cause. Typically, Israel and the Israeli presence are ignored—especially in maps. Some of the content in the textbooks appears to have been copied from the Palestinian curriculum—such as associating the Al-Aqsa Mosque with the entire Temple Mount or (falsely) depicting the 1969 fire at the mosque as a Zionist attack.<sup>142</sup>

However, other information likely reflects the kingdom's current pragmatism, as in statistics showing "Palestine's" population as a Jewish majority and Arab minority. Neither Israel nor Palestine is represented as a political unit per se. (As an example of the incongruence apparent throughout, elsewhere in the curriculum contradictory statistics *are* provided.)

In many parts of the curriculum, however, Israel is *not* acknowledged in maps, charts and many statistics. Below is a map showing the Islamic and Arab Worlds. Palestine (no Israel) here, is an Arab country.



*Social Studies and Civics, Grade 8, Vol. 2, 2019, p. 96.*

Another example of the curriculum's inconsistency toward all things Israel is Saudi Arabia's assumption of responsibility—with other Arab nations—for the rejection of the partition plan.

<sup>142</sup> Eldad J. Pardo, "The Al-Aqsa Fire—The Dangers of Manipulative Education: What Can Be Done," IMPACT-se, August 23, 2016,

<https://www.impact-se.org/the-al-aqsa-fire-the-dangers-of-manipulative-education-what-can-be-done/>;  
see also Palestinian Authority textbook: *Social Studies and Civics*, Vol. 2, Grade 7, 2019, p. 49.



Yet, elsewhere textbooks emphasize the kingdom's commitment to the Arab peace plan and include references to Jewish presence in the region throughout history.

### Similarities with the PA Curriculum

Parts of the Saudi curriculum seem heavily influenced by the Palestinian curriculum. One example is the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The current Palestinian narrative defines the entire Temple Mount plaza in Jerusalem as Al-Aqsa Mosque (instead of the age-old designation, Al-Haram Al-Sharif, the holy sanctuary).<sup>143</sup> Designating the Dome of the Rock as a Mosque is also part of a Palestinian Authority policy about which the Saudis appear to agree.



الشكل (٨٠) المسجد الأقصى يشمل كل ما هو داخل في السور  
**"The Al-Aqsa Mosque includes all that is inside the wall."**<sup>144</sup>

The caption stresses—in line with the Palestinian position—that "Al-Aqsa Mosque includes all that is inside the wall." This is only a recent development. Al-Aqsa Mosque was included as part of The Temple Mount Plaza, known for generations as Al-Haram Al-Sharif. In the above image, buildings with yellow-labels show only Al-Aqsa Mosque and the "Dome of the Rock Mosque," (designated as a mosque following the new Palestinian narrative).<sup>145</sup>

Another Palestinian narrative that found its way into the Saudi curriculum is the 1969 Al-Aqsa fire, falsely described as a "Zionist attack."<sup>146</sup>

<sup>143</sup> Yitzhak Reiter, *Jerusalem and its Role in Islamic Solidarity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 20–25; see also: Palestinian Authority textbook: *Islamic Education*, Vol. 1, Grade 5, 2019, p. 63.

<sup>144</sup> *Social Studies*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2017, p. 133.

<sup>145</sup> The Dome of the Rock is an octagonal shrine built during the Umayyad era over the foundation stone at the center of the Temple Mount, the sites of the Temple of Solomon and the Second Temple.

<sup>146</sup> Pardo, "The Al-Aqsa Fire," 2016,

ولتطور أحداث قضية فلسطين عقدت الدول الإسلامية مؤتمر القمة الإسلامي الأول في مدينة الرباط عام ١٣٨٩ هـ / ١٩٦٩ م على إثر مهاجمة الصهاينة للمسجد الأقصى وإحراقه، وقد شاركت فيه جميع الدول العربية والإسلامية.

For the advance of the Palestinian cause, the Islamic states convened the first Islamic summit in Rabat city in 1969 following the Zionist attack on the Al-Aqsa Mosque and setting it on fire. The summit was attended by all Arab and Islamic countries.<sup>147</sup>

***Social Studies, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 72.***

A careful reading of various editions of *Social and National Studies* textbooks suggest that there are certain dynamics—an up-down, back-and-forth movement, suggesting the Saudis are cautiously exploring a way out of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Zionist movement provides an interesting example. One 2017 textbook—apparently not republished—explains the Zionist movement fairly rationally: it aims to unify the Jews of the Diaspora and helps them settle in Palestine.



### Concepts and Terms

**Zionism:** Named after Zion, a mountain in Jerusalem, it is a Jewish political movement, European in its origins and beginnings, which aims at unifying the Jews of the Diaspora and settle them in Palestine. From this movement the establishment of their state resulted in the land of Palestine in 1948.

***Social and National Studies 2, Grades 10–12, Level 2, 2017, p. 46.***

Remarkably, in another 2017 social studies textbook,<sup>148</sup> as with religious studies,<sup>149</sup> Zionism is treated as a racist movement to expel Palestinians from their homeland. This unfortunate narrative continues to be published in 2019:

<http://www.impact-se.org/blog/page/4/>.

<sup>147</sup> *Social Studies, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 72.*

<sup>148</sup> *Social Studies, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2017, p.134.*

<sup>149</sup> *Hadith 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019, p. 253. (p. 272, 2017 edition).*



### مفاهيم ومصطلحات

الصَّهْيُونِيَّة: حركة يهودية  
سياسية عنصرية، أوروبية  
الأصل والمنشأ، ترمي إلى  
طرد شعب فلسطين وإقامة  
دولة يهودية بأسلوب القوة،  
وتشجيع الهجرة اليهودية  
إلى فلسطين، وسميت بهذا  
الاسم نسبة إلى جبل صهيون  
بالقدس.

### Concepts and Terms

**Zionism:** A Jewish racist political movement, European in its origins and beginnings, which aims at the expulsion of the people of Palestine and establishing a Jewish state by force, and encouraging Jewish immigration into Palestine. It was named after Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

*Social Studies, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 63.*

A positive image of Theodore Herzl, the founder of Zionism, is in a 2017 textbook but currently removed from the curriculum.



شكل (١١-٢) هرتزل

*Social and National Studies 2, Grades 10–12, Level 2, 2017, p. 47.*

In a demographic chart of Islamic and Arab states, Palestine is placed in the columns of states in which "95 percent and above" of the dwellers are Muslims.<sup>150</sup> A 2016 textbook, however, argues that Jews form 49.9 percent of the population of "Palestine" (including Israel, based on 2005 data).<sup>151</sup> A textbook from the 2017 curriculum appears to be more "pro-Jewish," arguing that 55 percent of the people of Palestine are Jews (based on 2011 data).<sup>152</sup>

A 2019 textbook takes a step backward. It ignores the Jews and the percentages altogether and is satisfied to report only the number of Palestinians (Arabs). Here the Jews comprise 51.1 percent of the total population (based on 2017 data).<sup>153</sup> All books blame continuous Jewish immigration for the large numbers of Jewish citizens.

Clearly, these numbers are not consistent. However, they do provide a realistic insight into the dilemma facing the kingdom. The constantly swinging pendulum that is the relationship with Israel (still officially unrecognized) is a work in progress, in the beginnings of its experimental stages.

A historical overview of "Palestine" indicates more pro-Israel material in a 2019 social studies textbook compared with one from 2017.<sup>154</sup> Both editions feature a section titled: "A Brief Overview of the History of Palestine." The 2017 textbook begins with: "The Arab-Canaanites lived from time immemorial in Palestine." The text then describes the Israelite invasion led by Joshua. Then came (Prophets) David and Solomon, but the land was soon conquered by the Persians and others.

The history of Palestine in the following chart suggests that the original dwellers of Palestine were Arabs. The Jews lived there only briefly, after the Arab-Canaanites returned in the modern age. But no "Palestinians" per se are included.

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<sup>150</sup> *Social Studies*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 121.

<sup>151</sup> *Social Studies*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2017, p. 132.

<sup>152</sup> *Social and National Studies 2*, Grades 10–12, Level 2, 2017, p. 45.

<sup>153</sup> *Social Studies*, 2019, p. 61.

<sup>154</sup> *Social and National Studies*, Grades 10–12, Level 2, 2017, pp. 46–54; *Social Studies and Civics*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, pp. 62–71.



'Timeline of the History of Palestine'<sup>155</sup>

### Timeline of the History of Palestine

Canaanite-Arabs, Israelites, Persians, Greeks, Nabatean-Arabs, Romans, Muslims, Crusaders, Muslims, British, Jews.

*Social and National Studies 2*, Grades 10–12, Level 2, 2017, p. 47.

Another textbook (2017, 2019)<sup>156</sup> tells a somewhat different story. On the face, it looks almost identical. Indeed the textbooks teach explicitly that "Palestine has been an Arab land," and that the "Jews did not have independent rule in Palestine beyond the ninety-years of David and Solomon." A closer look, however, leaves room for a different interpretation.

In other words, the 2019 textbook describes a "Semitic" immigration from Arabia to the Levant, but does not refer to the Canaanites as Arabs. It mentions the "Land of Canaan."<sup>157</sup>

The Hebrew language is mentioned elsewhere in the curriculum as an ancient Semitic language.<sup>158</sup> The Israeli context of the Hebrew language is still missing, but can be found on the internet for inquisitive students. Language maps suggest that Israel is part of the Arabic speaking region.<sup>159</sup>

This interpretation may be criticized as reading too much into the text; the curriculum, however, emphasizes archeological findings as a pillar of national identity.<sup>160</sup> Significantly, the 2019 edition continues to add the clarification "Jews" in parenthesis next to the term "Israelites." This is noteworthy given the attachment of the Holy Land to the Israelites in the Qur'an and other Islamic sources. Israelite kings are described the Islamic way, as Prophets of Allah. The textbook also stresses that Jews lived in the land throughout the Muslim era, because the Muslims allowed them to do so. Saudi students thus now learn about Jewish historical continuity—albeit not independence—in Palestine. This perhaps also implicitly opens a crack

<sup>155</sup> *Social and National Studies*, Grades 10–12, Level 2, 2017, p. 47.

<sup>156</sup> *Social Studies*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2017, p. 133; *Social Studies*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 62.

<sup>157</sup> *Social Studies*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 62.

<sup>158</sup> *Social Studies and Civics*, Grade 7, Vol. 1, 2019, p. 18.

<sup>159</sup> *Geography*, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019, p. 201.

<sup>160</sup> "National Historical Monuments" (Lesson 12), *Social Studies and Civics*, Grade 6, Vol. 1, 2019, pp. 100–04; *Social Studies and Civics*, Grade 4, Vol. 1, 2019, p. 18.

for Muslims to find the way to "allow" [Israeli] Jews who form the majority, to remain in their ancient homeland.

The text is unclear enough to expose certain rifts in the wall of Arab rejection of Israel.

### ◀ لمحة موجزة عن تاريخ فلسطين:

فلسطين بلاد عربية منذ الهجرات السامية التي خرجت من شبه الجزيرة العربية، وقد سكنها الكنعانيون واستقروا بها أكثر من ألف وخمسمئة عام، وسيطروا عليها سيطرة تامة، لذلك تسمى أرض فلسطين عند علماء الآثار بأرض (بلاد) كنعان نسبةً إلى الكنعانيين. وقد قاد نبي الله (يوشع بن نون) ﷺ بني إسرائيل (اليهود) ودخل بهم بعد نبي الله (موسى) ﷺ فلسطين. ثم جاء نبي الله (داود) ﷺ الذي انتصر على (جالوت) ملك الكنعانيين، وبعد وفاة (داود) ﷺ تولى من بعده ابنه نبي الله (سليمان) ﷺ.

### A Brief Overview of the History of Palestine

Palestine has been Arab land since the Semitic migrations from the Arabian Peninsula. The Canaanites dwelled there and lived there for more than 1,500 years and they fully ruled it. That is why Palestine is referred to by the archeologists as Land of Canaan, after the Canaanites.

Joshua son of Nun, The Prophet of Allah, led the Children of Israel (the Jews) after Moses, Prophet of Allah, and brought them into Palestine. Then came David the Prophet of Allah who triumphed against Goliath, the King of the Canaanites. And after David's death, Solomon, the Prophet of Allah, took over.

***Social Studies, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 62.***

The textbook teaches that Jewish presence in Palestine has continued throughout the Muslim rule (the last fourteen hundred years). Note that the "Turks and their German allies" lost the land. A close examination shows that the text puts the blame not on Zionist schemes, but on the Muslim side associated with the Germans who had been the aggressors in WWI (and, implicitly, the Hashemites who participated in the war on Britain's side). This is a completely different narrative from what one typically sees in other Arab curricula. Elsewhere in the curriculum, students learn that the Saudis kept neutral in WWI, in line with their interests.

ولقد سمح المسلمون لليهود أن يعيشوا في فلسطين مواطنين في ظل السيادة الإسلامية، وبقي الوضع كذلك في عهد جميع الدول الإسلامية حتى نهاية الحرب العالمية الأولى التي كانت الغلبة فيها للحلفاء ضد الأتراك وحلفائهم الألمان.

The Muslims allowed the Jews to live in Palestine as citizens under Islamic sovereignty. The situation so remained during the reign of all the Muslim states until the end of WWI, in which the Allies prevailed against the Turks and their German allies.

***Social Studies, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 63.***

Two historical facts that could be interpreted as pro-Israeli were removed from a 2019 social studies textbook: Herzl's efforts to secure Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II's consent for the Jewish National Home project; and the prior agreement of the US regarding the Balfour declaration.<sup>161</sup>

The 2019 description of the First Intifada<sup>162</sup> is largely free of incitement and anti-Semitic content formerly in the 2017 edition. Removed were enmity toward the "brute occupying enemy"; enhancing "the spirit of *jihad* in the way of Allah"; and containing "**the arrogance of the Jews** and shaking them psychologically" (bold added). Against the background of the economic thrust of this curriculum, particularly interesting is the removal of the otherwise innocuous "hitting the Israeli economy," which sustained "huge economic losses."<sup>163</sup>

The curriculum is candid regarding Arab responsibility for the 1948 War: "Britain retreated from Palestine and the Jews proclaimed the State of Israel. The armies of five Arab countries entered the war on the side of the Arabs of Palestine (*arab filastin*) . . . a number of Saudi units participated [in the war] with the Egyptian army."<sup>164</sup>

A history high school textbook lists Saudi contributions to the Palestinian cause. These include: opposing the Balfour Declaration; sending military units to fight against Israel alongside the invading Arab armies in 1948; accepting thousands of refugees; extending political support; calling for Islamic solidarity against the Zionist danger; financing countries fighting against the Zionists; using petroleum as a weapon; trying to make peace among the Palestinian organizations; rebuilding demolished Palestinian villages; and financially supporting the Intifada.<sup>165</sup>

Students learn that the kingdom has a place of honor among Arab states, resulting from its religious, political and economic support since the 1930s. Saudi King Abdulaziz "announced his complete rejection of the partition plan, and invested much effort to scuttle the partition."<sup>166</sup> The curriculum teaches that Saudi military units participated in the 1948 War against Israel. The text also mentions the king's correspondence with US President Franklin Roosevelt "in support of

<sup>161</sup> *Social Studies, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2017, p. 134.*

<sup>162</sup> *Social Studies, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 71.*

<sup>163</sup> *Social Studies, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2017, p. 142.*

<sup>164</sup> Note the historically correct use of "the Arabs of Palestine," rather than the anachronistic but common use of "Palestinians." *History, Grades 10–12, Level 2, 2017, p. 51.*

<sup>165</sup> *Social and National Studies 2, Grades 10–12, Level 2, 2017, pp. 55*

<sup>166</sup> *Social Studies, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 22.*

Palestinian rights."<sup>167</sup> Other Saudi contributions to Arab countries over the years are featured as well.

A list of ideas on how to confront the "Israeli danger" was removed.<sup>168</sup> The curriculum includes Saudi peace initiatives from 1981 and 2002.

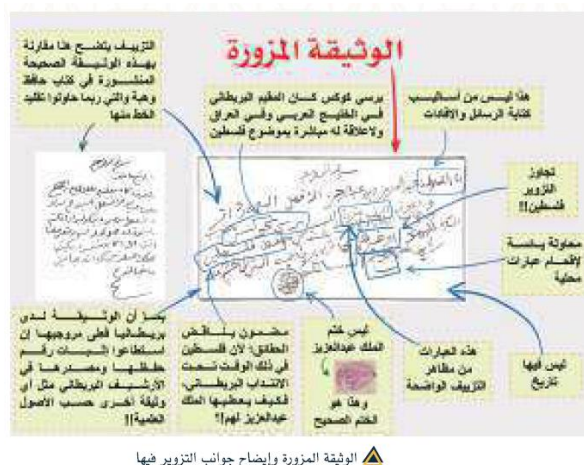
كما قدّم الملك عبدالله بن عبدالعزيز مبادرة سلام في مؤتمر القمة العربية عام ١٤٢٣هـ، تبنتها الدول العربية مشروعاً عربياً موحداً لحل النزاع العربي الفلسطيني، وتوفير الأمن في المنطقة.

King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz presented a peace initiative at the Arab summit conference in H 1423 [2002]. The Arab countries endorsed [this initiative] as a united Arab project to solve the Arab Palestinian conflict, and provide security for the region.

**Social Studies, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 75.**

We examined the use of "Jews," "Zionists" and "Israel" in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict taken from chapters found in 2017 and 2019. Initial findings reveal in 2017 texts "Jews" and "Israel" are more common; in the current curriculum "Zionists," "Zionism" and the "Zionist Enemy" is substituted but "Israel" is found as well. At times, the overall content in 2019 appears to be more moderate.<sup>169</sup> For example, religious elements, and physical and non-physical measures of action offering methods for Arabs to face the Zionist danger are removed.

Finally, there is also an apologetic tone in 2019 explaining the position of Saudi Arabia toward the Arab-Israeli conflict. The following image entitled: "The Forged Document," served to counter critics of Saudi policies. The text argues that a forged document was disseminated claiming that the Saudis colluded to sell Palestine to the Zionists.



**The forged document and clarifications of the forging**

**Social Studies, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 76.**

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>168</sup> The list is featured in *Social Studies, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track)*, 2017, p. 146.

<sup>169</sup> *Social Studies, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track)*, 2019, pp. 67–71; *Social and National Studies 2, Grades 10–12, Level 2*, 2017, p. 51–56; *Social Studies, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track)*, 2017, p. 138–43.



### Islamic Studies Textbooks (Israel)

A high school hadith and Islamic studies book includes much incitement and baseless propaganda.<sup>170</sup> The argument is that attempts to destroy Al-Aqsa Mosque and to build the Temple, constitute a common goal of the Jews. The chapter teaches that Al-Aqsa Mosque was built by Abraham, then again by Jacob and once again by Solomon who "built it as a huge building."<sup>171</sup> The text explains that Jewish rabbis (*hakhamat al-yahud*) weaved a legend about temple ruins under the mosque and connected it to Solomon, the Prophet of Allah. But archeologists digging under Al-Aqsa discovered that "there is not a single trace of Solomon's temple, but rather Islamic traces dating back to the Umayyad, Ayyubid, and other states."<sup>172</sup>

The Saudi textbook's authors appear to believe that anti-Jewish messaging is appropriate in this context. The Jews, according to this narration, did not kill Jesus, but they are criminals who killed other prophets, specifically Zachariah and John. (Both, known in Arabic as Zakariya and Yahya ibn Zakariya, are considered prophets in Islam.)

وبعد موت نبي الله سليمان ﷺ بقرون عبث فيه أيدي الآشوريين والرومان<sup>(٣)</sup>، ودُمّر المسجد الأقصى أكثر من مرة، ولما بعث الله عيسى ﷺ أمر بني إسرائيل بالمحافظة عليه وتطهيره والعناية به، فلم يبالوا بما أمرهم، وتمادوا في غيهم وكثرت جرائمهم حتى نالت من قدسيّة المسجد المقدّس، واتّخذوه سوقاً للسيارة والمرابين وملعباً للحمّام، ثم ازداد إجرامهم فقتلوا زكريا ويحيى عليهما السلام، وحاولوا قتل عيسى ﷺ.

Centuries after the death of Solomon, the Prophet of Allah, Assyrian and Roman hands violated Al-Aqsa Mosque. It was destroyed more than once, and when Allah sent Jesus he ordered the Children of Israel to preserve, purify and care for it. But they did not pay any attention to what he ordered them, persisted with their transgression, and their crimes increased until they harmed the sanctity of the Holy Mosque. They used it as a market for money changers and moneylenders and bathing court. Their criminality then increased and they killed Zechariah and John, and tried to kill Jesus.

**Hadith and Islamic Culture 3, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019, p. 325.**

There appears to be no difference between the ancient Jews and contemporary Israelis in the curriculum; both are accused of being determined to destroy Al-Aqsa.

### محاولات هدم اليهود للمسجد الأقصى وبناء الهيكل

مع الاحتلال اليهودي المعاصر لدولة فلسطين، ورغم كل المواثيق الدولية التي تمنع المساس بالمقدسات وأماكن العبادة؛ إلا أن الاحتلال اليهودي بجمعياته ومنظماته لا يفتأ ليل نهار يخطط ويكيد لهدم المسجد الأقصى وتدميره أو إحراقه والعبث فيه.

<sup>170</sup> *Hadith and Islamic Culture 3, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019, pp. 324–29.*

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 325.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 328. (pp. 327–28, 2017 and 2018 editions).

### Jewish Attempts to Demolish Al-Aqsa Mosque and Build the Temple

With the contemporary Jewish occupation of the State of Palestine, and despite all international conventions that prohibit abusing sanctuaries and places of worship, the Jewish Occupation [Israel], with its associations and organizations, continues its plan to demolish Al-Aqsa Mosque, destroy it or burn it, and tamper with it.

*Hadith and Islamic Culture 3, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019, p. 327.*

In relation to Jerusalem: Jews expel people from their houses and confiscate them, attack worshippers, harass and arrest people, close charities and act aggressively against Al-Aqsa.<sup>173</sup>

The message is long-standing and problematic: that Jews and Israelis are eternally treacherous, murdering prophets, committing irreparable evil and determined to harm Muslim holy places.

This *Islamic Studies* book still holds to the pan-Arab myth that Israel is plotting to expand from the Nile to the Euphrates to secure "Greater Israel" according to God's promise. The 2019 textbook omits a third stage: "The global Jewish government, to control the entire world."<sup>174</sup>

تتمثل الأهداف الصهيونية في منطقة المشرق العربي من خلال السعي للتوسع الإقليمي عبر ثلاث مراحل متعاقبة، وهي:

- أ. دولة إسرائيل في فلسطين.
- ب. دولة إسرائيل الكبرى في منطقة المشرق العربي.

وقد نجحت الصهيونية بمساعدة القوى الدولية كافة في تحقيق المرحلة الأولى، وذلك بإقامة دولة إسرائيل فيما بين عامي ١٣٦٧-١٣٨٧ هـ/ ١٩٤٨-١٩٦٧ م على كامل الأراضي الفلسطينية.

ولا تزال الصهيونية تعمل جاهدة في سبيل تحقيق بقية أهدافها المرحلية الأخرى، وهي إقامة دولة إسرائيل الكبرى في منطقة المشرق العربي كما جاء في الوعد الإلهي المزعوم من النيل إلى الفرات.

### The Goals of Zionism

The Zionist goals in the Arab East region aim at regional expansion in three<sup>175</sup> successive stages:

- A. The State of Israel in Palestine.
- B. The Greater State of Israel in the Arab East region.

With the help of all the international powers, Zionism has succeeded in achieving the first stage, namely the establishment of the State of Israel in the years 1367–1387 H./ 1948–1967 on all the Palestinian lands.

<sup>173</sup> *Hadith and Islamic Culture 3, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2017, p. 330; Hadith and Islamic Culture 3, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2018, p. 330; Hadith and Islamic Culture 3, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019, p. 330.*

<sup>174</sup> *Hadith 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2017, p. 273.*

<sup>175</sup> The third stage was removed from the 2019 edition. It last appeared in *Hadith 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2018, p. 273.*

Zionism continues to work hard in order to achieve the rest of its stage goals, which include the establishment the Greater State of Israel in the Arab East region, according to the claimed Divine Promise: from the Nile to the Euphrates.

**Hadith 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019, p. 254.**

The student is required to fill in a table and explain how Zionism uses illicit means through money, drugs, women and the media to achieve its goals.

**نشاط**

يُبين كيف وظفت الصهيونية كلًّا مما يأتي للوصول لأهدافها وتحقيق مخططاتها:

الوسيلة	أسلوب التوظيف	م
المال		١
السياسة		٢
المرأة		٣
المخدرات		٤
الإعلام		٥

### Activity 2:

Explain how Zionism utilizes the following means to achieve its goals and realize its designs:

No.	Means	Application Method
1	Money	
2	Politics	
3	Women	
4	Drugs	
5	Media	

**Hadith 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019, p. 256.**

Blaming Zionism for using such underhanded schemes (money, women, media and drugs) was more widespread in the 2017 Islamic Studies textbooks. Distributing drugs appeared four times in 2017–18<sup>176</sup> compared with one case in 2019 (above). Blaming the Zionists for spreading diseases was removed. In a 2018 textbook they were still blamed for spreading "sexual and other diseases in many Islamic countries."<sup>177</sup> A 2017 textbook claims: "In order to achieve their goals, the Zionists formed movements such as the Free Masons, B'nai B'rith, Lions Clubs International, and Rotary International."<sup>178</sup> Our interim research has not discovered this claim in the current curriculum. Similarly, the claim that Zionists use "entertainment family shows"<sup>179</sup> is

<sup>176</sup> *Hadith 1, Grades 10-12, Level 2, 2017, pp. 206–07; Hadith 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2018, pp. 273, 275.*

<sup>177</sup> *Hadith 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2018, p. 273. See also: Hadith 1, Grades 10-12, Level 2, 2017, p. 206.*

<sup>178</sup> *Hadith 1, Grades 10-12, Level 2, 2017, pp. 205–06.*

<sup>179</sup> *Hadith 1, Grades 10-12, Level 2, 2017, p. 207.*

removed from corresponding books in 2019. However, Jews are accused of trying to destroy Al-Aqsa Mosque by excavating underneath, using the media to hide their intentions.<sup>180</sup>

The following *Hadith* textbook includes a chapter on the "Zionist Danger." While primarily focused on religious subjects, it also delves into the historical debate about the legitimacy of Israel. The text argues that whatever right Jews may claim, the Arabs were the first to "settle in Palestine" and their presence there was never interrupted. Another argument is that the Jews ruled the land within the framework of other empires, but the situation had been resolved after Muslims conquered the land. Yet another argument claims that Muslims captured the land from the Byzantines (Christian-Romans) and not the Jews.

وهذا الحق – المزعوم – ساقط أيضًا لما يأتي:

أ) أن العرب أول من استوطن فلسطين، ولم ينقطع وجودهم فيها على مر التاريخ إلى يومنا هذا.

ب) أن فلسطين قد تعاقب على حكمها عدة دول (المصريون، والعراقيون، والفرس، واليونان، والرومان)، وحكم اليهود ضمن هذه الدول، وقد استقر الأمر فيها للمسلمين، الذين فتحوا فلسطين وهي تحت حكم النصارى الرومان، لا اليهود، فهم أحق الناس بها.

This alleged [Jewish] right falls apart also because of the following:

- A. The Arabs were the first to settle in Palestine, and their presence in it has not been cut throughout history until our present time.
- B. Palestine was ruled by a series of states—the Egyptians, Iraqis, Persians, Greeks and Romans—and the Jews ruled it within the framework of these states. Its issue has been settled for the Muslims, who conquered Palestine while it had been under the rule of Christian-Romans, not the Jews.

***Hadith 2, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019, p. 254.***

The same book still considers "Zionists" as the enemies of Muslim countries.

**الموقف من الصهيونية**

إن مواجهة الصهيونية تتم بعدة أساليب، أهمها:

- ١) تفنيد ادعاءات الصهيونية حول أحقية اليهود في فلسطين.
- ٢) السعي في مناصرة الشعب الفلسطيني، ومداخلة ما يقع عليه من الظلم والعدوان، والقتل والتشريد والإذلال.
- ٣) أن تسعى الدول الإسلامية على الأخذ بأسباب القوة: المادية والمعنوية، حتى تسلم من تسلط أعدائها من الصهاينة وغيرهم.

### Attitude toward Zionism

Confronting Zionism requires a number of methods:

1. Refutation of Zionism's claim over the right of Jews over Palestine.

<sup>180</sup> *Hadith and Islamic Culture 3, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2017, p. 328; Hadith and Islamic Culture 3, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2018, p. 328; Hadith and Islamic Culture 3, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019, p. 328.*

2. Striving to support the Palestinian people, and defend it from oppression, aggression, killing, displacement and humiliation.
3. Islamic countries should empower themselves materially and morally to be delivered from the Zionists and their other enemies.

**Hadith 2, Grades 10–12** (Humanities), 2019, p. 255.

The 2017 the Saudi curriculum treated the contrived anti-Semitic document, "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion as part of the history of Zionism. This Islamic learning textbook was eliminated from the current curriculum.

بروتوكولات حكماء صهيون : وهي مقررات سرية تسعى لتحقيق سيطرة اليهود على العالم، يترجح أنها لمؤتمر (بال) كشفت في القرن التاسع عشر، وقد حاول اليهود إنكارها إلا أن الأدلة توفرت لإثبات صحتها وصدورها عن حكماء صهيون .

**The Protocols of the Elders of Zion:** They are secret decisions that seek the control of the Jews over the world. They were likely [prepared] for the Bazel Conference [the First Zionist Congress]. They were exposed in the nineteenth century. The Jews tried to deny them, but there was proof that they were genuine and published by the elders of Zion.

**Hadith and Islamic Culture 1, Grades 10–12, Level 2, 2017, p. 204.**

## Conclusion: Crafting a New Saudi Civic Ethos

The challenges of the twenty-first century have forced the Saudi monarchy to reassess its position in both the Middle East region and the international community. Events have impelled Saudi Arabia's greater integration into the world economy; the rise of economic (oil) and political challenges (Arab Spring, Iran, Yemen), and a rapidly expanding young population with digital literacy and access to the internet has fostered increased expectations for personal freedom, expression, and more open social interactions.

Increased digital literacy, the ability of Saudis to travel abroad, as well as the rising youth population, has led to the realization by the Saudi state that the status quo cannot continue.<sup>181</sup> The emphasis on Saudi citizenship and on Saudi Arabia's pre-Islamic past, points to the evolution of a distinct Saudi identity, one that remains Islamic and traditional, but also takes on greater nationalistic significance.

For these substantial changes to take hold, Saudi citizens will need to adapt to the changing norms of both behavior and self-identification; the new curriculum from the Saudi Ministry of Education is a fundamental tool for observers to analyze these political and social developments. The new textbooks emphasize the role of a Saudi citizen who is loyal to the Saudi state and plays an active part in the future development of Saudi society. Additionally, textbooks focus on the centrality of Saudi Arabia as a regional actor, while underscoring the importance of national development and the kingdom's Islamic heritage as custodian of the two holy mosques. The Vision 2030 project which threads through the curriculum accentuates the responsibility of the state to provide social and economic stability, diversify the economy and provide adequate services to its citizens.

The significance of the new curriculum cannot be understated in the effort to change the outlook of Saudis from a nation of subjects to a nation of citizens having a stake in the Saudi national project.

The larger questions of how the Al-Sauds cope with the new Saudi generation in the twenty-first century, maintain their hold on power, and safeguard Saudi traditionalist identity is evident in the textbooks. The emphasis on morality and the traditional family represents a balancing act with the Vision 2030 efforts to promote transformation—however gradual—in Saudi society. Such changes become most apparent for students since the interaction necessary with the world beyond the kingdom is an integral part of the curriculum; students are taught accordingly.

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<sup>181</sup> Fifty percent of Saudi Arabia's population is under twenty-five. Joseph Braude, "Surveying Saudi Arabia's Youthful Majority," *Huffington Post*, October 24, 2017,

[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/joseph-braude/surveying-saudi-arabias-y\\_b\\_12619198.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/joseph-braude/surveying-saudi-arabias-y_b_12619198.html)



Modern ideas and terminology are an important part of the curriculum which seeks to engage the current generation with their new cultural framework. To facilitate this, Saudi children focus on Arabic as an important tenet of Saudi national and cultural identity. Saudi citizens, the textbooks argue, should support and encourage all national cultural activities.

The active participation of women in the labor market is a top priority of the Vision 2030 national development plan and is prominent in the Saudi textbooks. Teenage girls are called upon to create and take part in many national and private business initiatives. The textbooks serve as the key venue to educate future adults about economic initiatives. This includes the kingdom's transformation from the traditional reliance on oil, to the creation of a dynamic private sector, inducement of foreign investment, and a stress on home businesses focused on women.

Overall, the new curriculum, with its emphasis on the Saudi Vision 2030 economic and cultural plan, is forward-looking with respect to its citizens as well as most of its neighbors. And although many positive elements of past curricula have been removed from the current one, a path forward may be perceived in the movement of events inherent in the region—and the economic and cultural momentum of Vision 2030 fully embraced by the curriculum. Although many positive steps have been taken in the 2019–20 curriculum compared to the four years of previous textbooks researched, generations of students who began their education in 2016 remain in school; entire classes have already studied the previous books.

Thus, the Saudi curriculum poses a methodological dilemma: Does whatever good comes from the slow pace of gradual change represented by this new curriculum justify the lingering radical elements from previous curricula? Although this issue will not be resolved here, we can report on actual changes that have been made—and some that have not. A good place to start is with the Saudi Vision 2030 worldview, central to the curriculum, and a reason to highlight the final **IMPACT-se** standard: **SOUND PROSPERITY and COOPERATION**. The focus of students is on prosperity through hard work and cooperation, *not* on incitement or preparation for war.

The more orthodox and rigid aspects of the curriculum also teach students to avoid accusations of others as well as self-victimization. Responsibility for one's actions is placed on individuals and society, not on others (friends or foes). The standard of cooperation is manifested through the preparation of students to work with foreigners. Granted, religious instruction requires assimilation and friendliness to be strictly checked; but the success of the economically focused Vision 2030 depends on establishing Saudi Arabia as an intercontinental hub to attract foreign investors and tourists—necessitating an environment of peace and security. The curriculum firmly lays out the kingdom's policy of non-interference in other countries' affairs, while reinforcing the commitment to friendship treaties and good-neighborly relations.

The curriculum's inherent contradictions are strongly evidenced in the standard regarding **GENDER**. The textbooks do not "foster equality" between women and men. Neither do they "refrain from stereotyped gender roles," stressing the opposite, with the male as *head* of the family; the woman must obey her husband, or male guardian. As concerns "mutual respect," what is demanded by the curriculum is respect of gender based on differences of respective roles, rather than absolute equality.

Almost paradoxically, the curriculum expects young women to represent the kingdom's future success. They are thoroughly educated in a spectrum of practical areas including running a business. In this sense, women's empowerment is evident throughout the curriculum.

Similarly, the curriculum does not fully meet the international standard of presenting **UNBIASED INFORMATION** to students. Educational materials are *not* up-to-date, accurate, complete, balanced and unprejudiced; they *do not* use equal standards to promote mutual knowledge and understanding between different peoples. Still, we detected gradual change toward presenting different perspectives on a range of topics. Examples include removing an argument from the 2019 edition that the Crusades were driven by hate toward Islam.

The attitude toward Christians and the West is multifaceted. While the curriculum is intensely religious and strict, there is no particular animosity toward foreigners and non-Muslims. Regardless of theological differences and historical conflicts, students learn to appreciate the need for cooperation with the West despite concern over global cultural influences. They are taught to welcome Others to their home. "Non-Muslims in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia form part of the people of the Islamic society."<sup>182</sup> Muslim minorities in the West, for their part, should engage and integrate while preserving their unique culture.

As for Israel, students learned in 2017 textbooks that Zionists tried to build their national home with Ottoman consent, established "the State of Israel" in 1948, and were attacked by a host of Arab armies. The reasons given for the 1967 War are attacks by Arab Fedayeen and the Egyptian blockade of the Straits of Tiran.

The curriculum alludes to the Holocaust: "Some minorities are exposed to deportation and extermination from the countries such as the expulsion of the Jews from Europe and the Indians from Uganda." However, Israel is still not included on maps. Zionism was reintroduced in 2019 social studies textbooks as a racist movement. A further demonstration of the curriculum's state of flux is seen in two similar ideas: a sentence arguing that Jews wish to control the world was removed but another arguing that they want to control the Middle East remains in the current curriculum.

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<sup>182</sup> *Arabic Language 4, Language Competencies, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 159.*

As for **PEACEMAKING**, the textbooks invest much on dialogue skills and a plan that entails peace and stability in the region. While *jihad* war is thoroughly discussed, it is taught as an aspect of national defense rather than fighting infidels. At times, the Saudi curriculum takes a direct stance against Islamism and terrorism, at home and abroad. Security—as the opposite of fanaticism and terrorism—is important for all. Saudi Arabia is lauded for helping Arab causes in international circles and as the author of two peace plans. Peace with Israel is not discussed. Treaties with infidels must be respected unless the treaty is breached (as compared with Muhammad's conquest of Mecca).

There is **INCITEMENT** against gays (they should be killed); Western culture is denigrated and blamed for conspiring against Islam (see **HATE** below).<sup>183</sup> The rote accusation that Israel is trying to conquer the region and destroy Al-Aqsa Mosque persists.

The standard of **NO HATE** is not fully met. Gays are hated directly and should be punished.<sup>184</sup> Some extreme Christian hate expressions have been removed but hate against "enemies of Islam" continues. Global (Western) culture is reviled and presented as corrupt and rife with plans to destroy Islam intentionally.<sup>185</sup> Anti-Jewish hatred is still widespread. Jews are blamed as assassins, described as monkeys and will be fought and killed in the day of resurrection.<sup>186</sup> In religious textbooks, those who do not follow tawhid ([Allah's] oneness) are considered infidels or major sinners including: Christians, Zoroastrians, Jews, gays, tribal herbalists, "sorcerers" and all other polytheists, hypocrites and enemies of Islam.<sup>187</sup>

Our research on the **INDIVIDUAL OTHER** stands out in one particular way: There is no fostering or encouragement of friendship with non-Muslim Others. However, with the advent of Vision 2030, personal relationships with Other foreign visitors and investors seem inevitable.

The curriculum has shown **RESPECT** toward a number of Western individuals over the four years reviewed by **IMPACT-se**. Notable Western scientists such as Thomas Edison, Rudolf Diesel and James Watts are included in the 2019 curriculum but without any images or useful insights. Abraham Maslow's image along with his Hierarchy of Human Needs is discussed in depth. But the full biographies and images on such figures as Marie Curie, Alexander Graham Bell and Johannes Gutenberg were removed. A 2017 textbook portrayed a surprising picture of Theodore Herzl, the founder of the Zionist Movement; the picture was removed from social studies texts in 2019, where Zionism is now described as racist. An example about the Ottoman Empire shows (grudging) respect toward the Saudi's traditional enemy. Yet, there is no respect

<sup>183</sup> *Hadith 1*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019. p. 214.

<sup>184</sup> *Fiqh 1*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 255.

<sup>185</sup> *Hadith 1*, 2019. p. 214.

<sup>186</sup> *Tawhid 2*, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019, p. 86.

<sup>187</sup> *Tawhid 5*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Science and Administration), 2019, pp. 151–52. *Tawhid 1*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019, p. 165.

for Shiites, Sufis, Zoroastrians, Christians or Jews (or any other infidels). The failures and successes within this standard represent as much as any the changes faced by an education system trying to find its way by trial and error.

Within the textbooks, the conservative fabric of Saudi society remains intact, with an emphasis on the family as the center of a strong moral Saudi state. Morality, respect for authority, and a pious and traditional outlook all serve as important points of reference for the textbooks to dictate proscribed behavior. Lessons are interspersed with more traditional instruction on the virtues of the Saudi family and the woman's role in caring for children in the home; the man's proper place remains outside. Nevertheless, the curriculum appears to have begun the process of change; the door has been opened, however slightly, and will in all likelihood be put to a good use by entrepreneurial female students as they become young adults.

The attitude toward Iran and Turkey is blurred with contradictions. Portrayal of Iran appears more radicalized in recent editions. While the 2017 *Social and National Studies* textbook points to Persian *influence* in the Arabian Peninsula, the 2019 edition speaks about Persian *occupation*. Turkey-Saudi relations through the centuries are taught pragmatically. The early Ottoman Classical Age is described in positive terms while the late Ottoman Empire, which pitted the Turks against the Saudis is strongly criticized.

Finally, it is hard to establish the curriculum's outlook on certain issues. For example, the concept of *wasatiyyah* may be explained to mean "moderation," accompanied by harsh criticism of Islamist terrorism and extremism. At other times *wasatiyyah* is a tool to demonstrate Islam's superiority to Others, including "non-moderate" Christians and Jews. While the curriculum tries to evolve with such inherent contradictory elements, the radical orthodoxy of the Wahhabis remains dominant.

IMPACT-se's review of Saudi textbooks has detected subtle, yet substantive changes in the language, tone, narrative and outlook of the curriculum; efforts are made to describe, analyze and portray the Other with less hostile and destructive rhetoric. Yet, there has not been a wholesale elimination of problematic content<sup>188</sup> or language.

While Saudi Arabia's curriculum still does not meet international standards of peace and tolerance, the focus is not on incitement or preparation for war. The textbooks envision a future of prosperity through hard work by a new generation of Saudis who will embrace their traditional values and culture even as the kingdom prepares to welcome international trade, investment and visitors.

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<sup>188</sup> Problematic content includes violence or incitement to violence; hatred of the Other; and radical, inappropriate or disturbing material.

Our goal has been to analyze the Saudi textbooks based on accepted international standards of peace and tolerance. Since the 2030 Vision worldview has been infused throughout the curriculum, we had to consider every aspect through that lens as well as our own monitoring standards. Vision 2030 represents a laudable goal; but goals are just that. When those goals contradict other aspects of the curriculum, an inevitable dichotomy emerges. The gap between such goals and their practical application—both in the curriculum and practice throughout Saudi society, is what needs to be narrowed; **IMPACT-se** will be monitoring each step along the path.





## Methodology

IMPACT-se's research utilizes a content analysis research method to examine the textbooks according to the following criteria which is a condensed version of UNESCO's standards for peace and tolerance in school education:

1. **RESPECT:** The curriculum should promote tolerance, understanding and respect toward the "Other," his or her culture, achievements, values and way of life.<sup>189</sup>
2. **INDIVIDUAL OTHER:** The curriculum should foster personal attachment toward the "Other" as an individual, his or her desire to be familiar, loved and appreciated.<sup>190</sup>
3. **NO HATE:** The curriculum should be free of wording, imagery and ideologies likely to create prejudices, misconceptions, stereotypes, misunderstandings, mistrust, racial hatred, religious bigotry and national hatred, as well as any other form of hatred or contempt for other groups or peoples.<sup>191</sup>
4. **NO INCITEMENT:** The curriculum should be free of language, content, and imagery that disseminate ideas or theories which justify or promote acts and expressions of violence, incitement to violence, hostility, harm and hatred toward other national, ethnic, racial or religious groups.<sup>192</sup>
5. **PEACEMAKING:** The curriculum should develop capabilities for non-violent conflict resolution and promote peace.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> As defined in the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance Proclaimed and signed by Member States of UNESCO on November 16, 1995, Articles 1, 4.2. See also the UN Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding Between Peoples (1965), Principles I, III. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948): Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial and religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

<sup>190</sup> The goal of education for peace is the development of universally recognized values in an individual, regardless of different socio-cultural contexts. See Ibid., Article 6. See also, on exchanges between youth, the UN Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (1965), Principles IV, V.

<sup>191</sup> Based on Ibid., Articles III.6, IV.7 and VII.39; and on the Integrated Framework for Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy, approved by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-eighth session, Paris, November 1995, Article 18.2.

<sup>192</sup> As defined in Article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2106 (XX) on December 21, 1965. See also Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2200A (XXI) on December 16, 1966.

<sup>193</sup> Based on the Integrated Framework for Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy, approved by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-eighth session, Paris, November 1995, Article 9; and on the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance proclaimed and signed by member states of UNESCO on November 16, 1995, Article 5.



6. **UNBIASED INFORMATION:** Educational materials (textbooks, workbooks, teachers' guides, maps, illustrations, aids) should be up-to-date, accurate, complete, balanced and unprejudiced, and use equal standards to promote mutual knowledge and understanding between different peoples.<sup>194</sup>

7. **GENDER:** The curriculum should foster equality and mutual respect between women and men. It should refrain from stereotyped gender roles.<sup>195</sup>

8. **SOUND PROSPERITY and COOPERATION:** The curriculum should educate for sound and sustainable economic conduct and preservation of the environment for future generations. It should encourage regional and local cooperation to that effect.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Based on UNESCO recommendation concerning education for international understanding, cooperation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms, adopted by the General Conference at its eighteenth session, Paris, November 19, 1974, Article V.14.

<sup>195</sup> The preamble to the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance proclaimed and signed by member states of UNESCO on November 16, 1995, notes the Convention on the Elimination of Any Form of Discrimination against Women and emphasizes respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to gender.

<sup>196</sup> Based on UNESCO recommendation concerning education for international understanding, cooperation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms, adopted by the General Conference at its eighteenth session, Paris, November 19, 1974, Articles III.6, and IV.7. On the imperative for developing "systematic and rational tolerance teaching methods that will address the cultural, social, economic, political and religious sources of intolerance," see the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance proclaimed and signed by member states of UNESCO on November 16, 1995, Article 4.2. On education for international cooperation, see also the UN Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (1965), Principle II.

## List of Textbooks

The following Saudi Arabian curriculum textbooks were analyzed for the research in this study. The titles both here and referenced in the text have been translated into English to aid the reader. **IMPACT-se** typically researches all available textbooks used in a curriculum. If new textbooks or previously unavailable books become available after a report's publication, every effort will be made to update reports to include any relevant material. We welcome any comments related to the acquisition of any omitted materials.

### Grade 1

1. *Family Education*, Grade 1, Vol. 1 (for Girls), 2018.
2. *Family Education*, Grade 1, Vol. 2 (for Girls), 2017.
3. *Family Education*, Grade 1, Vol. 1 (for Girls), 2019.
4. *Fiqh and Suluk [Jurisprudence and Behavior]*, Grade 1, Vol. 1, 2018.
5. *Fiqh and Suluk*, Grade 1, Vol. 2, 2016.
6. *My Language*, Grade 1, Vol. 1, 2018.
7. *My Language*, Grade 1, Vol. 2, 2018.
8. *My Language*, Grade 1, Vol. 1, 2019.
9. *Tawhid (Oneness [of Allah])*, Grade 1, Vol. 1, 2018.
10. *Tawhid*, Grade 1, Vol. 2, 2016.

### Grade 2

11. *Family Education*, Grade 2, Vol. 1 (for Girls), 2018.
12. *Family Education*, Grade 2, Vol. 1, 2019.
13. *Family Education*, Grade 2, Vol. 2 (for Girls), 2017.
14. *Family Education*, Grade 2, Vol. 2, 2019.
15. *Fiqh and Suluk*, Grade 2, Vol. 1, 2018.
16. *Fiqh and Suluk*, Grade 2, Vol. 2, 2017.
17. *My Language*, Grade 2, Vol. 1, 2018.
18. *My Language*, Grade 2, Vol. 2, 2017.
19. *Tawhid*, Grade 2, Vol. 1, 2018.
20. *Tawhid*, Grade 2, Vol. 2, 2017.

### Grade 3

21. *Family Education*, Grade 3, Vol. 1 (for Girls), 2018.
22. *Family Education*, Grade 3, Vol. 2 (for Girls), 2017.
23. *Fiqh and Suluk*, Grade 3, Vol. 1, 2018.
24. *Fiqh and Suluk*, Grade 3, Vol. 2, 2017.
25. *My Language*, Grade 3, Vol. 1, 2018.
26. *My Language*, Grade 3, Vol. 2, 2017.
27. *Tawhid*, Grade 3, Vol. 1, 2018.
28. *Tawhid*, Grade 3, Vol. 2, 2017.

#### Grade 4

29. *Family Education*, Grade 4, Vol. 1 (for Girls), 2018.
30. *Family Education*, Grade 4, Vol. 1, 2019.
31. *Family Education*, Grade 4, Vol. 2 (for Girls), 2017.
32. *Family Education*, Grade 4, Vol. 2 (for Girls), 2019.
33. *Fiqh and Suluk*, Grade 4, Vol. 1, 2018.
34. *Hadith and Sira* [Islamic Traditions and Prophetic Biography], Grade 4, Vol. 1, 2017.
35. *Hadith and Sira*, Grade 4, Vol. 2, 2019.
36. *My Beautiful Language*, Grade 4, Vol. 1, 2018.
37. *My Beautiful Language*, Grade 4, Vol. 2, 2017.
38. *Social and National Studies*, Grade 4, Vol. 1, 2018.
39. *Social and National Studies*, Grade 4, Vol. 2, 2017.
40. *Social Studies and Civics*, Grade 4, Vol. 1, 2019.
41. *Social Studies and Civics*, Grade 4, Vol. 2, 2019.
42. *Tawhid*, Grade 4, Vol. 1, 2018.
43. *Tawhid*, Grade 4, Vol. 1, 2019.
44. *Tawhid*, Grade 4, Vol. 2, 2017.
45. *Tawhid*, Grade 4, Vol. 2, 2018.

#### Grade 5

46. *Family Education*, Grade 5, Vol. 1 (for Girls), 2018.
47. *Family Education*, Grade 5, Vol. 1 (for Girls), 2019.
48. *Family Education*, Grade 5, Vol. 2 (for Girls), 2017.
49. *Family Education*, Grade 5, Vol. 2 (for Girls), 2019.
50. *Fiqh and Suluk*, Grade 5, Vol. 1, 2018.
51. *Fiqh and Suluk*, Grade 5, Vol. 2, 2019.
52. *Hadith and Sira*, Grade 5, Vol. 1, 2017.
53. *Hadith and Sira*, Grade 5, Vol. 2, 2017.
54. *My Beautiful Language*, Grade 5, Vol. 1 (for Girls), 2018.
55. *My Beautiful Language*, Grade 5, Vol. 2 (for Girls), 2017.
56. *Social and National Studies*, Grade 5, Vol. 1, 2018.
57. *Social and National Studies*, Grade 5, Vol. 2, 2017.
58. *Social Studies and Civics*, Grade 5, Vol. 1, 2019.
59. *Social Studies and Civics*, Grade 5, Vol. 2, 2019.
60. *Tawhid*, Grade 5, Vol. 1, 2018.
61. *Tawhid*, Grade 5, Vol. 2, 2017.

#### Grade 6

62. *Family Education*, Grade 6, Vol. 1 (for Girls), 2018.
63. *Family Education*, Grade 6, Vol. 1 (for Girls), 2019.
64. *Family Education*, Grade 6, Vol. 2 (for Girls), 2019.
65. *Fiqh and Suluk*, Grade 6, Vol. 1, 2018.
66. *Fiqh and Suluk*, Grade 6, Vol. 2, 2017.
67. *Hadith and Sira*, Grade 6, Vol. 1, 2017.
68. *Hadith and Sira*, Grade 6, Vol. 1, 2019.

69. *Hadith and Sira*, Grade 6, Vol. 2, 2019.
70. *My Beautiful Language*, Grade 6, Vol. 1, 2018.
71. *My Beautiful Language*, Grade 6, Vol. 2, 2017.
72. *Social and National Studies*, Grade 6, Vol. 1, 2018.
73. *Social and National Studies*, Grade 6, Vol. 2, 2017.
74. *Social Studies and Civics*, Grade 6, Vol. 1, 2019.
75. *Social Studies and Civics*, Grade 6, Vol. 2, 2019.
76. *Tawhid*, Grade 6, Vol. 1, 2018.
77. *Tawhid*, Grade 6, Vol. 2, 2017.

#### Grade 7

78. *Family Education*, Grade 7, Vol. 1 (for Girls), 2018.
79. *Family Education*, Grade 7, Vol. 2 (for Girls), 2017.
80. *Fiqh*, Grade 7, Vol. 2, 2017.
81. *My Eternal Language*, Grade 7, Vol. 1, 2018.
82. *My Eternal Language*, Grade 7, Vol. 2, 2017.
83. *My Eternal Language*, Grade 7, Vol. 2, 2019.
84. *Social and National Studies*, Grade 7, Vol. 1, 2018.
85. *Social and National Studies*, Grade 7, Vol. 2, 2017.
86. *Social Studies and Civics*, Grade 7, Vol. 1, 2019.
87. *Social Studies and Civics*, Grade 7, Vol. 2, 2019.
88. *Tafsir [Qur'an Commentary]*, Grade 7, Vol. 2, 2017.
89. *Tawhid*, Grade 7, Vol. 1, 2018.
90. *Tawhid*, Grade 7, Vol. 2, 2017.

#### Grade 8

91. *Family Education*, Grade 8, Vol. 1 (for Girls), 2018.
92. *Family Education*, Grade 8, Vol. 2 (for Girls), 2017.
93. *Fiqh*, Grade 8, Vol. 1, 2018.
94. *Fiqh*, Grade 8, Vol. 2, 2017.
95. *Hadith*, Grade 8, Vol. 1, 2017.
96. *Hadith*, Grade 8, Vol. 2, 2017.
97. *My Eternal Language*, Grade 8, Vol. 1, 2018.
98. *My Eternal Language*, Grade 8, Vol. 2, 2017.
99. *Social and National Studies*, Grade 8, Vol. 1, 2018.
100. *Social and National Studies*, Grade 8, Vol. 2, 2017.
101. *Social Studies and Civics*, Grade 8, Vol. 1, 2019.
102. *Social Studies and Civics*, Grade 8, Vol. 2, 2019.
103. *Tafsir*, Grade 8, Vol. 1, 2017.
104. *Tafsir*, Grade 8, Vol. 2, 2017.
105. *Tawhid*, Grade 8, Vol. 1, 2018.

#### Grade 9

106. *Family Education*, Grade 9, Vol. 1 (for Girls), 2018.
107. *Family Education*, Grade 9, Vol. 2 (for Girls), 2017.

108. *Fiqh*, Grade 9, Vol. 1, 2018.
109. *Fiqh*, Grade 9, Vol. 2, 2017.
110. *Fiqh*, Grade 9, Vol. 1, 2019.
111. *Hadith*, Grade 9, Vol. 1, 2017.
112. *Hadith*, Grade 9, Vol. 2, 2017.
113. *My Eternal Language*, Grade 9, Vol. 1, 2018.
114. *My Eternal Language*, Grade 9, Vol. 2, 2017.
115. *Social and National Studies*, Grade 9, Vol. 1, 2018.
116. *Social and National Studies*, Grade 9, Vol. 2, 2017.
117. *Social Studies and Civics*, Grade 9, Vol. 1, 2019.
118. *Social Studies and Civics*, Grade 9, Vol. 2, 2019.
119. *Tafsir*, Grade 9, Vol. 1, 2017.
120. *Tafsir*, Grade 9, Vol. 2, 2017.
121. *Tawhid*, Grade 9, Vol. 1, 2018.
122. *Tawhid*, Grade 9, Vol. 2, 2017.

#### High School Level 1

123. *Arabic Language 1*, Grades 10–12, Level 1, 2017.
124. *Family and Health Education 1*, Grades 10–12, Level 1 (for Girls), 2017.
125. *Fiqh 1*, Grades 10–12, Level 1, 2017.
126. *Social and National Studies 1*, Grades 10–12, Level 1, 2017.
127. *Tawhid 1*, Grades 10–12, Level 1, 2017.

#### High School Level 2

128. *Family and Health Education 2*, Grades 10–12, Level 2 (for Girls), 2017.
129. *Hadith and Islamic Culture 1*, Grades 10–12, Level 2, 2017.
130. *Social and National Studies 2*, Grades 10–12, Level 2, 2017.

#### High School Level 3

131. *Arabic Language 3*, Grades 10–12, Level 3 (for Saudi schools outside the county), 2017.
132. *Arabic Literature 1*, Grades 10–12, Level 3 (Literature and Qur'an), 2017.
133. *Family and Health Education 3*, Grades 10–12, Level 3 (for Girls), 2017.
134. *Fiqh 2*, Grades 10–12, Level 3 (Literature and Qur'an), 2017.
135. *Fiqh 6*, Grades 10–12, Level 3 (Science and Administration), 2017.
136. *History and National Education 1*, Grades 10–12, Level 3 (Administration, Literature and Qur'an), 2017.
137. *Islamic Studies—Tafsir 4 + Fiqh 6*, Grades 10–12, Level 3 (for Saudi schools outside the country), 2017.
138. *Social and National Studies 3*, Grades 10–12, Level 3 (Literature and Qur'an), 2016.
139. *Tafsir 4*, Grades 10–12, Level 3 (Science and Administration), 2017.

#### High School Level 4

140. *Arabic Language 4*, Grades 10–12, Level 4 (Science and Administration), 2016.
141. *Family and Health Education 4*, Grades 10–12, Level 4 (for Girls), 2017.
142. *Fiqh 4*, Grades 10–12, Level 4 (Literature and Qur'an), 2017.

143. *Geography and National Education 1*, Grades 10–12, Level 4 (Administration, Literature and Qur'an), 2017.
144. *Hadith and Islamic Culture 2*, Grades 10–12, Level 4 (Literature and Qur'an), 2017.
145. *Tawhid 2*, Grades 10–12, Level 4 (Literature and Qur'an), 2017.
146. *Tawhid 4*, Grades 10–12, Level 4 (Science and Administration), 2017.

#### High School—Humanities Track

147. *Arabic Language 5—Literature Studies*, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019.
148. *Arabic Language 6—Rhetoric and Critical Studies*, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019.
149. *Arabic Language 7—Language Studies*, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019.
150. *Fiqh 2*, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019.
151. *Geography*, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019.
152. *Hadith 2*, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2017.
153. *Hadith 2*, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019.
154. *History*, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2017.
155. *History*, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019.
156. *Tafsir 2*, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2017.
157. *Tafsir 2*, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2018.
158. *Tafsir 2*, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019.
159. *Tawhid 2*, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2017.
160. *Tawhid 2*, Grades 10–12 (Humanities), 2019.

#### High School—Joint Track

161. *Arabic Language 1—Language Competencies*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019.
162. *Arabic Language 2—Language Competencies*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019.
163. *Arabic Language 3—Language Competencies*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019.
164. *Arabic Language 4—Language Competencies*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019.
165. *Fiqh 1*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2018.
166. *Fiqh 1*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019.
167. *Hadith 1*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019.
168. *Health and Female Education*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track) (for Girls), 2019.
169. *Life Skills and Family Education*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019.
170. *Social Studies*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2017.
171. *Social Studies*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019.
172. *Tafsir 1*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2018.
173. *Tafsir 1*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019.
174. *Tawhid 1*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2018.
175. *Tawhid 1*, Grades 10–12 (Joint Track), 2019.

#### High School—Optional Track

176. *Art Education*, Grades 10–12 (Optional Track), 2019.
177. *Fiqh 3*, Grades 10–12 (Optional Track), 2018.
178. *Fiqh 3*, Grades 10–12 (Optional), 2019.



High School—Level 5

179. *Arabic Language 5*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Science and Administration), 2017.
180. *Arabic Language 5*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Science and Administration), 2019.
181. *Arabic Language 5*, Grades 10–12 [Exercises], Level 5 (Science and Administration), 2019.
182. *Family and Health Education 5*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (for girls), 2017.
183. *Fiqh and its Principles 4*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2017.
184. *Fiqh and its Principles 4*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019.
185. *Geography and National Education 2*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature, Administration and Qur'an), 2019.
186. *Hadith and Islamic Culture 3*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2017.
187. *Hadith and Islamic Culture 3*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2018.
188. *Hadith and Islamic Culture 3*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019.
189. *Hadith and Islamic Culture 5*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Science and Administration), 2017.
190. *Hadith and Islamic Culture 5*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Science and Administration), 2019.
191. *Social and National Studies 5*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2016.
192. *Tawhid 3*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2018.
193. *Tawhid 3*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019.
194. *Tawhid 5*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Science and Administration), 2017.
195. *Tawhid 5*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Science and Administration), 2018.
196. *Tawhid 5*, Grades 10–12, Level 5 (Science and Administration), 2019.

High School—Level 6

197. *Arabic Language 6*, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (Science and Administration), 2019.
198. *Arabic Language 6—Exercises*, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (Science and Administration), 2019.
199. *Arabic Literature 2*, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019.
200. *Family and Health Education 6*, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (for girls), 2019.
201. *Fiqh 5*, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (Literature and Qur'an), 2017.
202. *Fiqh 5*, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019.
203. *Fiqh 7*, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (Science and Administration), 2017.
204. *Fiqh 7*, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (Science and Administration), 2019.
205. *History and National Education 2*, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (Administration, Literature and Qur'an), 2019.
206. *Social and National Studies 6*, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (Literature and Qur'an), 2016.
207. *Tafsir 3*, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (Literature and Qur'an), 2017.
208. *Tafsir 3*, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (Literature and Qur'an), 2019.
209. *Tafsir 5*, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (Science and Administration), 2017.
210. *Tafsir 5*, Grades 10–12, Level 6 (Science and Administration), 2019.